Children in Bondage

Edwin Markham
Ben B. Lindsey
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CHILDREN IN BONDAGE

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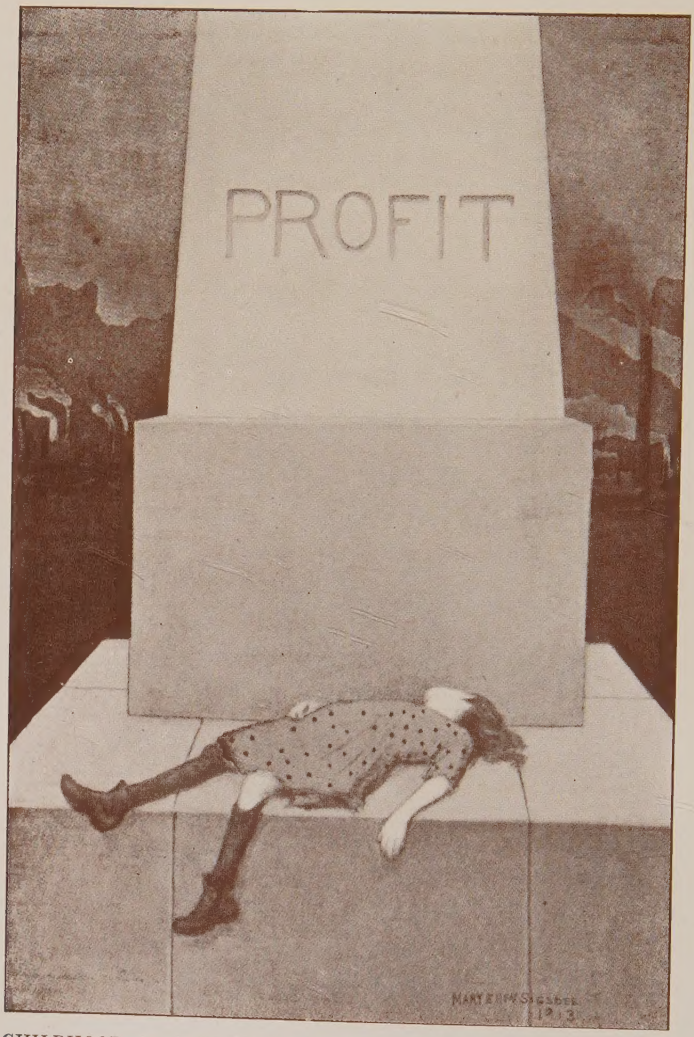

CHILDHOOD IS SACRIFICED DAILY THAT PROFIT MAY FLOW FROM EVERY TURN OF A MILL-WHEEL

CHILDREN IN BONDAGE

A Complete and Careful Presentation of the Anxious Problem of Child Labor —its Causes, its Crimes, and its Cure

BY

EDWIN MARKHAM,
BENJAMIN B. LINDSEY, AND GEORGE CREEL

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

OWEN R. LOVEJOY

SECRETARY NATIONAL CHILD LABOR COMMITTEE

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"Jesus called a little child unto him, and said, Whoso shall offend one of these little ones . . . it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea."

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DEDICATED,

With high regard,

TO MRS. EVA INGERSOLL-BROWN,

Worker in Noble Causes, and

President of The International Child Welfare League.

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INTRODUCTION

THE revelation in the Census of 1900 that approximately 2,000,000 little children were employed in wage-earning occupations in this country led to the organization of the National Child Labor Committee.

This Committee, organized in 1904 for a short and sharp campaign against child labor, has had to face disillusionment. Idealists, who supposed that if the people realized the truth about child labor they would forthwith abolish it, have learned that public knowledge is not sufficient until it is fired with enthusiasm and guided by active leadership. The National Child Labor Committee has grown in membership and efficiency, and it has been able to advance with ever increasing momentum against the phalanx of tradition, indifference and greed. But the short and sharp campaign is lengthening itself into a twenty years' war. However, so long as we continue to have the loyal co-

operation of our members, we know that there will be an end to the war, a joyful day when the Committee may celebrate, not by an appeal for doubling the membership, but by permanently disbanding the forces.

The Committee has been successful beyond anticipation in the securing of improved laws in the various states and in many instances in improved methods of enforcement. Their Uniform Child Labor Law, drafted two years ago, has been unanimously indorsed by the American Bar Association and already submitted for adoption in a number of states. The Committee has recently gone still further in submitting to Congress a bill to prohibit the interstate transportation of goods manufactured by the labor of children.

The Committee does not look upon these legislative measures as ideal, for the laws thus far proposed would exclude children under 14 years from the ordinary gainful occupations, whereas all the evidence we have been able to gather during the past nine years supports the belief that children should not be employed in wage-earning occupations under 16 years of age, and that

compulsory school attendance should uniformly be extended to 16 years. While there are doubtless occasional individual exceptions, it may be broadly stated that the time under 16 years of age spent in industry is wasted time—unprofitable to the industry and unprofitable to the child. The expert testimony of students of vocational guidance is unanimous in declaring that there are no proper vocations for children under 16 years. The advocacy of a general 14-year-age limit by this Committee is therefore presented only as the next attainable step.

We also realize that no law will enforce itself. It must be backed up by healthy and persistent public interest. Society must come to see this whole subject from a higher point of view than a simple appeal for relief from physical hardship with the passing of the worst physical dangers. The work we must do in the coming decade does not appeal to the imagination or contain the "dramatic features" involved in getting eight-year-old girls out of an eleven-hour day in the cotton mill. It appeals rather only to those with a broad, statesman-like view of the whole subject. In future we must depend on the

coöperation of those who realize that all the child labor laws thus far enacted are primitive and that we must advance to higher standards and to more scientific methods of administration before the two million working children in America have the opportunity for development which our country's welfare demands.

CHILDREN IN BONDAGE

NOTE

THE three authors of this volume are united of course in the spirit and mission of these pages. Still it may interest the reader to know that chapters II-XI and chapter XVI are from the pen of Edwin Markham. The rest of the chapters are from the pens of Judge Lindsey and George Creel.

I

THE SACRIFICE OF GOLDEN BOYS AND GIRLS

IN these United States, dedicated to freedom, justice and fraternity, nearly two million little children are fed annually into the steel jaws of the modern industrial machine. Mammon has proved no less cruel to the little ones of the world than Moloch. Herod is held in detestation, yet he was more kind in that he slew outright.

Nearly two million! Golden boys and girls—citizens of the future and mothers that might be—mangled, mind, body, and soul, and aborted into a maturity robbed of power and promise. They make no cry, these tiny victims. They are too tired. One listens in vain for some bitter wail to ring high and clear above the roar of the machinery that has them in its grasp. But the commonwealths of the republic, like huge shells of the sea, are filled with their sighings. Listen where one will and one may hear it, for few

indeed are the states in all this great country that come into the public court of public opinion with clean hands. Look where we will we may see, for the stretch of the two million is from East to West, from North to South.

Mark them as they huddle in the darkness, the squalor and the disease of city tenements, pouring youth and hope and happiness into the myriad inconsequentialities that they make for the adornment of those who preen themselves in the upper sunlight!

Behold them as they bend low in the blinding dust of the coal-breakers, winnowing the rushing stream with torn and bleeding fingers; as they watch needles that set 3,000 stitches a minute; as they creep on their knees through the mire of the cranberry bogs; or as they whimper in the biting dawn on the way to the shucking sheds where the sharp edges of the oyster shell will cut and bruise their little hands!

Their faces are ghastly in the glare of the white-hot furnaces of the glass house where they sweat the long nights through; and, as they scurry with their midnight messages to saloons, jails and houses of prostitution, an

evil wisdom dawns in their young eyes that is not good to look upon.

In the cotton mills, where they toil from dawn to dusk, from dusk to dawn, the close air is heavy with flying lint; in the silk factories the shining threads weave themselves into the aching eyes, and, from the tobacco that is rolled into cigarettes by little fingers, arise minute particles that it is not well to breathe.

The acid that is in the heads of shrimps eats the flesh away from tiny hands, yet Louisiana is not alone in its shame, for in the canneries of other states an exhaustion is entailed that burns the baby bodies as surely and as steadily as any acid.

These, then, are the pictures to be visualized, the sounds to be heard, if the curse of child labor is to be lifted. Calmness and dispassion are of no use to us in this crisis. It is possible to deal argumentatively and controversially with sticks and stones, but blood and tears must be made to wrench at the heart-strings. Statistics are well enough, but who has ever been able to put deformity, helplessness, and despair into figures? The struggle is one that calls for a Joan of Arc

fervor, a certain Peter the Hermit quality, and not until this high emotionalism makes the thing *real* shall we be able to dispel the shadow that now darkens our free institutions.

The time is ripe. From coast to coast, industrial and economic problems are claiming the attention of the people. Never before was the heart of the world so soft! Never before was there such splendid insistence that injustices must be righted, equalities restored and the obligations of the strong to the weak both recognized and fulfilled. Penal reform, woman's work and woman's place, the riddle of prostitution, slums, sanitation, mortality tables, and birth rates, all are being accorded an importance that is new to civilization.

One principal feature of the fight is to secure public recognition of child labor as a *fundamental* evil—to bring home to every mind the underlying and compelling relation that toiling children bear to vice, crime, low wages, disemployment, congestion, and the ferment of unrest. The closer one comes to the problem the more intense grows the conviction that much of our national despair

flows from a system that saps the moral and physical strength of our young, begetting rickety and unfit fathers and mothers for the begetting of rickety and unfit children, generation after generation.

There is much to be done and there is room for all in the doing. Not until Congress and the legislatures are made to take the same burning interest in the welfare of children that they have long manifested in crops and livestock, is any decent citizen entitled to rest and complacency.

In such a comparison, by the way, what a wonderful chance there would be for the savage irony of a Swift! During all these years, when children have been exploited to their destruction and despair, without inquiry or even interest, we have seen thousands of dollars spent in waging war against cattle fevers and hog cholera. Even while it was an impossibility to learn anything authoritative with regard to child labor in the cotton mills, the government issued report after report upon the cotton crop and the proper procedure against the boll weevil.

In the Gulf states there are laws for the protection of the oyster and the shrimp—

tender laws dealing minutely with the crime of tearing them from their beds before they have attained a certain size and length; and yet one may look in vain through these same statute books for laws that prescribe penalties for those ruthless employers who drag babies from their beds to labor in the shucking sheds and feed their flesh to the acid of the shrimps.

To arouse this national passion, this overwhelming public sentiment, is no easy task, for the way is thick with obstacles. Not only is it human nature to avoid and to minimize the unpleasant; not only are there certain established traditions about youthful diligence and "early habits of industry"; but behind all, above all, will ever be found the truculent shape of Special Privilege, fighting with every resource of its corrupt control of courts and legislators. Child labor, no less than the tariff, the trusts and monopoly, is a foundation stone in the towering structure of Big Business; and in every state it will be seen that the interests that fight political, industrial, and economic advancement, are also bitter in their antagonism to child labor reform.

Let us cite a case in point. Six years ago, as the result of an imperative demand, Congress ordered the Department of Labor to make an inquiry into the condition of women and child wage earners in the United States. Amid the general rejoicing it was not noticed that the Aldriches and the Cannons had crippled the measure by refusing to let it carry any appropriation, but such was the case.

Through the splendid energy and persistence of the Department of Labor, however, the work was carried to completion, and, in 1910, nineteen volumes were ready for publication, each volume a rich mine of damning fact. But, instead of being printed as a department report, in which shape it would have been available for wholesale distribution, it was transformed into a *Senate document* and only fourteen volumes were printed, to the number of 2,000 copies.

Senator Reed Smoot, Morman apostle and untiring tool of Special Privilege, was responsible for this bit of legerdemain that turned an invaluable public report into what is practically a secret record.

This open antagonism, however, manifested in legislative delays and reactionary

decisions, is far from being Special Privilege's heaviest gun in the child labor battle. The most effective weapon employed by Big Business, when all is said and done, is a certain secret control of a large portion of the press—a control that permits the suppression of child labor facts in great measure, or the subtle minimization of such revelations as may not be suppressed.

As a consequence, many people are inclined to the belief that the child labor evil is "grossly exaggerated," and that it is more or less of a hubbub inspired by muckrakers and professional agitators and fostered by "maudlin sentimentalists". As a matter of fact, the child labor situation has suffered from *understatement.* Out of the fear bred by the charge of sensationalism, the national committee and the various state organizations have largely excluded the blood and sweat and tears from their reports, and, out of this very dispassion, have failed of full effect.

It is true that much has been done in the last ten years. It is equally true that much remains to be done. The Uniform Child Labor Law, drafted by the National Child

Labor Committee, and indorsed by the American Bar Association, prohibits wage-earning occupations for children under 14, forbids night work by children under 16, prescribes an eight-hour day, demands educational qualifications equal to five yearly grades, documentary proof of age and the keeping of employment certificates on file.

Arizona alone has passed this law. In other states, the age limit varies from 12 to 14, and even this gain is nullified by many outrageous exemptions and entire lack of proper inspection and law enforcement. According to the government report, there is not a single cotton mill community in which the child labor laws are not violated; and Charles L. Clute, a reliable voice, makes the bold statement that, "in two-thirds of the states of the Union, there is no effective enforcement of the child labor laws, absolutely none; and the states, where there is an even fairly good system of factory inspection, will not exceed ten."

The Southern states have a pretty way of exempting the "child of dependent parents"; others demand no proof of age; and Rhode Island, where working certificates are

not kept on file, has become famous for the fashion in which one certificate, issued to a 14-year-old boy, will then do duty for his younger brothers, cousins and friends. The cotton states, too, open wide the doors for lawlessness by cleverly including a clause in their child labor laws that prohibits conviction unless the employer "knowingly and wilfully" violates its provisions.

Small wonder, then, that in the cotton mills today, according to the government inquiry, there are more than 40,000 children between the ages of 10 and 15. Even these figures are admittedly inexact, for investigation is attended by many difficulties. Not even the Black Hand is more vigilant than these cotton mill officials; and, when the approach of an outsider is discovered, the little ones are hidden in closets, waste boxes, entries, or else hurried home until the "muckraker" has departed.

Despite these precautions, facts and photographs have been secured that give ample corroboration to the statement that a majority of the workers in the cotton mills are under 16, and that the ages of them run down to 6 and 7. The girls are used as "spinners"

for the most part—walking up and down between the spinning frames and knotting threads that break; and the boys are employed as "doffers", for the replacement of empty bobbins with full ones.

The hours that these children work is well nigh incredible. Either they toil from six in the morning until six at night, or from six at night until six in the morning. In addition to this, the mills demand an extra half day's work on Saturday, in consequence of which the children that quit at six o'clock Saturday morning must return at noon. Taking out the time necessary for eating and journeying, it will be seen that the sleeping period cannot exceed four hours for the twenty-four.

It is also the truth that the day-shift is frequently asked to work two and three nights a week, so that there are days when the child works for seventeen hours at a stretch. And, even when there is a full day of rest, the situation is scarcely more bearable. Investigators frequently found night-shift workers sitting over the fires at eleven o'clock in the forenoon, too listless to go to bed. And, when they did lie down, the noise of

the crowded, paper-walled shacks made sleep a thing far from soothing and restful.

Amid such unremitting drudgery, such horror of monotony, how can there be talk of health, education, and intelligence? What does life hold out for the tiny unfortunate, described in this painful paragraph culled from the government's report on "The Cotton Textile Industry":

"One of these children is an emaciated little elf, fifty inches high and weighing, perhaps, forty-eight pounds, who works from six at night until six in the morning, and is so tiny that she has to climb up on the spinning frame to reach the top row of spindles."

The criminality of it all is made more loathesome by an admixture of hypocrisy. In one mill town, where scores of mere children worked twelve-hour stretches in the hot, lint-filled, machinery-roaring rooms, the management made a speciality of flower culture, and fairly drooled in description of the uplift that was hoped from petunias and geraniums. An eminent gentleman, actually serving as chairman of a National Child Labor Commission, organized to secure "correct in-

formation," was president of the two worst mills in the State.

The silk mills are not less terrible in their demands upon childhood than the cotton industry; and after going through a factory there comes the belief that the "frou-frou" is, in reality, the sob of murdered youth. For toil that bends their backs into distressing shapes and blinds their eyes until sight is a torment, little girls receive as much as four cents an hour.

Now and then, in the course of their rounds, investigators happen upon phrases that one could wish to have written across the heavens in letters of fire. Mark this conversation of a Pennsylvania field man with a little tot he found in front of a silk factory one winter morning long before the light:

"No," she said, "I am not tired. It is my sister who is tired. She is on the night-shift and works for twelve hours. The light been very bad. My sister come out in the morning from the mill, and she see threads, threads, threads. She go home and sleep, and then jump up and say, 'Oh my eyes! My eyes is all threads.' Her back hurt too. She stand and stand all night."

It is in Pennsylvania, too, equally with the Virginias, that the glass factory still takes its toll of children as relentlessly as Juggernaut itself. The glare of the furnaces is like some giant burning glass upon the small boys, who sit over molds in a temperature of 100 degrees, turning out ten bottles a minute, or else run back and forth with trays. The hours are cruelly long; the day-shift of one week is the night-shift of the next; and always, in addition to the glare and swelter, there are the myriad particles of glass dust that fill the air. Exhaustion stencils harsh lines in the face of the child worker, but none so deep as those of the glass-house boy when he staggers from his inferno into the bitter air of an early winter morning.

Poor little Smikes! The glass manufacturers demand boys; and whole families are dragged into the towns, soon to become entirely dependent upon the youngsters who have employment in the factories.

Pennsylvania also enjoys the evil distinction of being the one state that still persists in exalting its coal mines above human rights. Journey through the anthracite regions, and the objects that first attract us are the boys

MIDNIGHT WORKERS IN A GLASS FACTORY

BOYS EMPLOYED IN THE ANTHRACITE COAL REGIONS TO PICK OUT PIECES OF STONE AND SLATE

that man the "breakers." They crouch on rude seats constructed above the chute that rushes the coal into the steel jaws of the "breakers"; and their duty is to pick out all pieces of stone and slate. For nine hours a day, at an average wage of seven cents an hour, they work in this cramped position amid clouds of dust, their one hope being that their hands will harden sufficiently to ease the pain of cuts and bruises.

A sombre note of tragedy is the only break in the monotony of it all. Now and then the stream of coal pauses for a moment, and some foolish youngster yields to the temptation to stand up in the chute and stretch his legs and arms. The machinery starts with a jerk, he falls, and that which is taken from the bloody jaws of the "breaker" bears resemblance to nothing human.

Year after year the Pennsylvania Legislature has been begged to raise the age limit for this employment to sixteen years, and always is the coal lobby powerful enough to continue its unholy purchase of children's lives for a weekly pittance.

It is not within the province of other states, however, to point the finger of scorn at those

commonwealths that smear the glass and cotton and silk and coal industries with the life-blood of little children. Not until New York, Delaware, New Jersey, Maine, and the Gulf Coast States and various others bring the canneries under the operation of their child labor laws may they consider themselves free from shame.

Than the canning industry, let it be stated with emphasis, there is no form of child labor that requires a more intense educational campaign. Public opinion, in the main, clings to the days when the good housewife put up her own fruit and vegetables, and persists in regarding the cannery as an opportunity for "pin money" and "picnics".

There is no greater lie, for the cannery has come to be a "high speed" industry, and little children are fed into its machinery as relentlessly as into the cotton, silk or glass factories. In the first place, it is *not* a vacation job. Early in the spring the berry fields call for labor: during the summer months there are the vegetables, in the autumn come the cranberry bogs and the apples, and in the winter there are the oysters and the shrimps of the South. Poles,

Italians and Bohemians—strays, families and whole colonies—are herded from state to state by the inevitable padrone; and no matter where it be, only infancy saves the child from participation in the drudgery.

In the cannery the day-shift and the night-shift are one and the same. At midnight the family reels home; and at 4-30 in the morning, the children still drunk with sleep, the family trudges back to take up a new day of drudgery. Mere tots snip beans at a cent a pound; six-year-olds husk corn at three cents a bushel; and eight-year-old girls "cap" cans.

An interesting occupation that! When the cans are filled with syrup or brine, a conveyor carries them from the automatic filler to the capping machine; and, as these cans swirl by, it is the duty of the eight-year-olds to drop on the metal caps that are to be soldered. Forty a minute for nine hours a day!

Snip! Snip! Snip! Until the fingers refuse to ply the knife, until the back aches like a tooth, until the tads fall asleep and tumble from their boxes, still clutching a bean in their little hands. Listen to this

from a mere baby who had snipped beans from 4-30 a. m. to 10 p. m.:

"My fingers is broke," he sobbed, holding up a hand swollen out of shape. But, he confided, "beans ain't nothin' to peas," for during the pea season his mother and sister would come home every night at one and two o'clock "so sick they fell down and vomited."

And always uproar! The vats steam, the machinery clanks, the conveyors rattle, and, above all, there is the drop of thousands of cans, singly, from the floor above. Wet with juice, sick with weariness, stunned by noise—this is the "picnic" that the canning industry affords to hundreds of children between the ages of four and fifteen.

It is in the oyster and shrimp sheds of the Gulf Coast States, however, that canning reaches the acme of child-labor horror. Here, in the winter months, we shall see many of the faces that we observed "up North" during the spring, summer and fall, for the padrones herd their Poles, Italians and Bohemians to new fields as a shepherd changes pastures.

Oyster shucking is a simple process.

The workers line up on each side of low cars filled with oysters, which, partly opened by steaming, must now be separated with a knife, and the juicy content dropped into a pot. At five cents a pot, four pounds to the pot, it is possible for the industrious child to earn the splendid sum of twenty cents a day.

Work starts at three o'clock in the mornings, oftentimes, and it is bitter cold in the shucking sheds before the sun comes up. Sharp-edged shells, numb fingers, cramped position, hour after hour of unremitting toil—is it a wonder that the children grow old at ten, and forget what laughter is?

But wait! There *are* recreations: When the six- and seven-year-olds sink from exhaustion, they are permitted to "rest up" by tending the inevitable baby. Even this pleasure, however, is not unalloyed, for baby-tending militates against the output. As one girl of seven stated, "I shuck six pots a day if I don't got the baby with me, and two pots if I got him."

Oyster shucking, however, is a genteel pastime compared with "shrimp picking," which, translated, means plucking off the

shrimp's head. Other forms of child labor eat youth just as surely, but shrimp picking does it right before the eye. In the head of the shrimp, there is a certain corrosive substance so violent that it will even bite through shoe leather. Imagine, then, what it does to baby hands!

But, across this black expanse of misery, there beams a ray of hope: This same acid that gnaws the hands of little workers also perforates the cans, hence great activity and sudden interest in precautionary measures to save the tin. Surely the tiny victims of the shrimp industry have a right to say each night, "God bless the cans!"

Poor, pathetic mites! Many of them four and five years old! And in states where the laws are precise for the protection of the infant oyster and the young shrimp!

Nor may the cranberry—Thanksgiving joy—escape the shame that stains the shrimp, the oyster, the fruit and the vegetable. As one stands amid the marshes of New Jersey, watching a creeping army of men, women and children strip the vines of their fruit, there is evident the same hopelessness, helplessness, and misery. Each

year the tenements of Philadelphia pour their hundreds into the cranberry bogs. A padrone herds them and drives them, and not even Legree, in his day of glory, ever exercised more autocratic power over human beings. He charges his victims double railroad fare; operates a commissary at which his herd must buy bad food at exorbitant prices; and, as a final gouge, exacts money "presents" at the end of the season.

The cranberry vine is only a few inches high, and the workers must double up on their knees and progress by a series of jerks. It is a crop that requires occasional flooding, so that the ground is always soggy with occasional pools here and there. Foreign vines scratch the hands; swarms of mosquitoes inflame the lacerations; and there are storms now and then from which there is no shelter. Children as young as five are in the army that the padrone herds across the bogs from dawn to dusk, for there is the fear of frost; and what is human health in comparison with a perishable crop?

When night comes, and the tired wretches are allowed to take swollen hands and aching knees to bed, what then? For their

housing there are rudely built barracks with rooms five and one-half by six and one-half. A four-foot bunk occupies half the space, under which are the mattresses for the children; and this one room, filled with flies and mosquitoes, serves for the cooking, eating, and sleeping of an entire family.

Evil housing conditions, such as would shame a tenement, characterize the entire canning industry. Whether New Jersey, New York, Delaware or the Gulf Coast States, there is the same emphasis on squalor. Rude barracks, rough sheds, old box cars, ruined carriage houses—anything seems to be regarded as "good enough" for the canning families. Delaware, however, holds the record with a chicken coop converted into a dwelling for seventeen children and five adults.

This, by way of illustration, from the report of New York's commissioner of labor on canneries: "The surrounding grounds were frequently littered with filth, while the shanties and dormitories were so thoroughly congested that at times families of from six to ten members were compelled to live, sleep, and eat in a single room."

A WALK THROUGH THE TENEMENT DISTRICT OF ANY METROPOLIS IS A PAGE FROM HUGO

Let us now leave the field, the shed, the mine, the mill and the factory, and, still following the squalid march of the child-labor evil, enter the sacred portals of the American "home." In all this world there is nothing more hideous than the rapacity that has not scrupled to use our most hallowed traditions as a shield for the cruelest exploitation of little children.

In New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Chicago, and every other city with huge manufacturing interests, there are thousands of "homes" that are no more than sweat-shops where men, women, half-grown children, and babies toil incredible hours for incredible pittances. No law reaches these "home workers" except the compulsory education statutes, and these apply to the school day only. The pupil may work from six in the morning until nine o'clock, and from three in the afternoon until midnight and this law is not offended.

A walk through the tenement district of any metropolis is a page from Hugo. Galley slaves never marched more gloomily than the boys and girls who trudge up and down, either lugging home huge bundles or else re-

turning the finished product to the factory. Yet these weary journeyings, sad though they may seem, are joyous diversions to most of the children, for they permit a brief escape from the darkness and drudgery of the "home." In these "homes," where cooking, eating, and sleeping merge into one great blob of squalor, there are no idle moments or idle people, save for the baby that still sucks at the mother's breast.

On and on, page upon page, this dreary recital might be continued. There are the "small town" factories of Missouri, exempted from a good law by a population provision; the tobacco fields of Kentucky that cause that state to be enrolled among the ten most illiterate in the Union; and there are the street trades and the messenger service that turn small boys into drunkards, drug fiends, thieves, and cadets, and contribute 60 per cent. of the inmates to our reformatories! But of what avail to continue?

Surely enough has been said to burn into every mind the true horror of the evil—to bring home to every man and woman the imperative necessity of revolt and assault. The spirit of conservation is in the air, and

our mineral deposits, our water power, our timber lands, and our arid tracts have all become objects of the nation's care and attention. How much more important to conserve our children! If we are to win free from the evils that menace our experiment in democracy, we must guard our youth, the citizens of the future from the paralyzing effects of child labor.

As it stands now, we are " jerry-building." Our towering superstructure rests on a rotten foundation. Not until we have done away with child labor completely, not until we have taken the blood and bones of babies out of the keystone, will our industrial arch know permanence.

II

THE CRIMSON IN OUR COTTON

IN detailing this sordid tragedy of child labor, occupation by occupation, so that the horror of it may be blazed like another handwriting on the wall, what more natural than that commencement should be made with what has been well termed the "Herod among industries?"

Come, let us go into the weaving rooms of the cotton mills, and behold in the hot, damp, decaying atmosphere, little wan figures flying in hideous cotillion among looms and wheels—children choked and blinded by clouds of lint forever molting from the webs, children deafened by the jar and uproar of an eternal Niagara of machines, children silenced utterly in the desert desolation of the neverceasing clamor, children that seem like spectre-shapes, doomed to silence and done with life, beckoning to one another across some thunder-shaken Inferno.

Is it not as shameful as astounding that

this craft that was known to the toilers of Memphis and Shushan, of Sardis and Tadmor, should now, after all the advance of the ages, be loaded in any degree upon the frail, half-formed bodies of little children? To what purpose then is our "age of invention?" Why these machines at all, if they do not help to lift care from the soul and burden from the back? To what purpose is our "age of enlightenment," if, just to cover our nakedness, we establish among us a barbarism that overshadows the barbarism of the savage cycle? Is this the wisdom of the wise? Is this the Christianity we boast of and parade in benighted Madagascar and unsaved Malabar? Is this what our orators mean when they jubilate over "civilization" and "the progress of the species?"

After all these ages, more children are crowded into this limbo of the loom than into any other cavern of our industrial abyss. In the Southern cotton mills, where the doors shut out the odor of the magnolia and shut in the reeking damps and clouds of lint, and where the mocking bird outside keeps obligato to the whirring wheels within, we find a gaunt goblin army of children keeping their

forced march on the factory floors—an army that outwatches the sun by day and the stars by night.

New England has its evils, but it is in the South, real centre of the cotton industry, that the essense of this social infamy is found. Alabama, Georgia and South Carolina permit boys and girls of *twelve* to labor incredible hours at the loom, Mississippi mercifully exempts *girls* of this tender age, but not boys, and the age limit in North Carolina is *thirteen.* As if this were not cruel enough, in no Southern state is adequate proof of age demanded or proper provision made for factory inspection.

For a day or a night at a stretch, an army of unprotected, unregarded little ones do some one monotonous thing—abusing their eyes in watching the rushing threads; dwarfing their muscles in an eternity of petty movements; befouling their lungs by breathing flecks of flying cotton; bestowing ceaseless, anxious attention for hours where science says that "a twenty-minute strain is long enough for a growing mind." And these are not the children of recent immigrants, hardened by the effete conditions of foreign

servitude. Nor are they negro children who have shifted their shackles from field to mill. They are white children of old and pure colonial stock. Think of it! Here is a people that has outlived the bondage of England, that has seen the rise and fall of slavery—a people that must now fling their children into the clutches of capital, into the maw of the blind machine; must see their latest born drag on in a base servility that reminds us of the Saxon churl under the frown of the Norman lord. For Mammon is merciless.

Children rise at half-past-four, commanded by the ogre scream of the factory whistle; they hurry, ill fed, unkempt, unwashed, half dressed, to the walls which shut out the day, to dust and merciless maze of the machine. Here, penned in little narrow lanes, they look and leap and reach and tie among acres and acres of looms. Always the snow of the lint in their faces, always the thunder of the machines in their ears. A scant half-hour at noon breaks the twelve-hour vigil, for it is nightfall when the long hours end and the children may return to the barracks they call "home," often too tired to wait for the cheer-

less meal which the mother, also working in the factory, must cook after her factory day is over. Frequently at noon and at night they fall asleep with the food unswallowed in the mouth. Frequently they snatch only a bite and curl up undressed on the bed, to gather strength for the same dull round tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow.

Nor even when the mill is left is thralldom ended. For the gray, monotonous, dingy shacks in which the slaves of the loom eat and sleep belong to the mill owner. And the rent is graded according to the number of children sent to work in the mill. The more the children, the less the rent. Mammon is wise; he knows how to keep a cruel grip upon the tots at the fireside.

Dr. McKelway of the National Child Labor Bureau relates an incident that may give some adequate idea of the despotic control exercised by these textile barons:

"One of our agents, a lovable and gentle Christian minister, went to a cotton mill in Georgia, two miles from the railroad. He engaged a room at the hotel. Going first to the school he took some photographs of the children. Then the president of the mill

learned of his presence (he had told his name and his errand), and ordered him not to trespass further, saying that the school as well as the mill, and even the streets of the mill were his property. Further investigation was impossible, and the minister then found that his room at the hotel was forbidden him, he was warned that it would be unsafe for him to remain in the village that night, and he had to return to the railroad station."

Why do these children know no rest, no play, no learning, nothing but the grim grind of existence? Is it because we are all naked and shivering? Is it because there is sudden destitution in the land? Is it because pestilence walks at noonday? Is it because war's red hand is pillaging our storehouses and burning our cities? No, forsooth! Never before were the storehouses so crammed to bursting with bolts and bales of every warp and woof. The children, while yet in the gristle, are ground down that a few more useless millions may be heaped up.

We boast that we are leading the commercialism of the world, and we grind in our mills the bones of the little ones to make good our boast. Rev. Edgar Murphy of

Montgomery, Alabama, photographed many groups of these pathetic little toilers, all under twelve. Jane Addams saw in a night factory a little girl of five, her teeth blacked with snuff, like all the little ones about her—a little girl who was busily and clumsily tying threads in coarse muslin.

Nor is the element of dread lacking. Pneumonia stalks in the damp, lint-filled rooms, and leads hundreds of the little ones out to rest. Hundreds more are maimed by the machinery, two or three for each of their elders. One old mill-hand carries sixty-four scars, the cruel record of the shuttles.

A labor commissioner of North Carolina reported that there are two hundred and sixty-one cotton mills in that State, in which nearly forty thousand people are employed, including nearly eight thousand children. The average daily wage of the men is fifty-seven cents, of the women thirty-nine cents, of the children twenty-two cents. The commissioner goes on to say: " I have talked with a little boy of seven years who worked for forty nights in Alabama, and with another child who, at six years of age, had been on the night-shift eleven months. Little boys

turned out at two o'clock in the morning, afraid to go home, would beg a clerk in the mill for permission to lie down on the office floor. In one city mill in the South, a doctor said he had amputated the fingers of more than one hundred children, mangled in the mill machinery, and that a horrible form of dropsy occurs frequently among the overworked children."

The *Washington Post,* commenting on child labor in the South some years ago, said: "The average life of the children after they go into the mills is four years. It would be less cruel for a state to have children painlessly put to death than it is to permit them to be ground to death by this awful process."

All who have gone through the mills tell the same story of misery and injustice. Elbert Hubbard, after one tour of inspection, cried out: "I know the sweat-shops of Hester street, New York; I am familiar with the vice, depravity, and degradation of Whitechapel, London; I have visited the Ghetto of Venice; I know the lot of the coal-miners of Pennsylvania; and I know somewhat of Siberian atrocities; but for misery, woe, and hopeless suffering, I have never seen anything

to equal the cotton-mill slavery of South Carolina."

But not alone upon the South lies the blame of these human hells. Many of the mills of the South are owned by New England capitalists, the machinery having been removed from the North to the South, so as to be near the cotton fields, near the water-power, and, shame to record, near the cheap labor of these baby fingers, for the brief time before they shall be folded waxenly and forever. It was the New England shipper, greedy for gold at any cost, who carried the blacks to the South, planting the tree of slavery in our soil. And now it is the Northern money-grubber who is grafting upon our civilization this new and more terrible white slavery. " South Carolina weaves cotton that Massachusetts may wear silk! "

This new slavery of the mills is worse than the old slavery of the cotton fields. For the negro of the old days was well fed and sure of shelter; he did his work under the open sky, singing as he toiled, and finding time to weave out of his mystic brain a wild balladry and a poetic folklore. But the slavery of the white women and children sucks life dry

of all vigor and all joy. These white workers are stunted, slow, and sad; their lives are emptied of passion and poetry. In the long revolution of the wheel of Change, in the irony of the grim Destinies who laugh behind the veil, it is now the stiff-necked whites —they who of old would not work beside the negro—who in this generation must bear all the burden of the mill. The young negro, not cunning enough to speed the spindle, is spared. It is now the white child who is in bondage, while the little darkey is out in the cotton fields under the open heavens.

These white children often begin work in the mill with no fragment of education. And often after a year of this brain-blasting labor they lose the power to learn even the simple art of reading. There is sometimes a night-school for the little workers, but they often topple over with sleep at the desks, after the long grind of the day. Indeed they must not spend too many wakeful hours in the night-school, shortening their sleep-time; for the ogre of the mill must have all their strength at full head in the early morning. The overseer cannot afford to be sending his mounted " poker-up " to their homes to rout

them out of bed, day after day, nor can he be continually watching lest they fall asleep on the mill floor while working or eating. Nor can he afford to keep a clerk busy docking the wages of these little sleep-starved workers for the constant mistakes and accidents of the fatigued and fumbling fingers. For these little drudges are fined for their lacks and lapses; and they are sometimes in debt to the concern at the week's end.

But worse than all the breakdown of the body is the breakdown of the soul in these God-forgetting mills. Here boys and girls are pushed into the company of coarse men who are glib with oaths and reeking jests. Torrents of foul profanity from angry overseers wash over the souls of the children, till they, too, grow hardened in crusts of coarseness. Piled on all these are the fearful risks that the young girls run from the attentions of men "higher up," especially if the girls happen to be cursed with a little beauty.

That there is also moral disintegration of the adults is amply indicated by the following demand made recently by the Rev. C. E. Weltner, of Olympia, South Carolina:

"We want a *vagrancy law* equally enforced among whites and blacks. Every mill community has a number of white loafers, spending their days in idleness, hunting or fishing, and supported by the earnings of women and children. This nuisance is responsible for much of the misery and for the otherwise unnecessary child and woman labor. I can point out case after case of the most abject poverty where the lazy or drunken father regularly twice a month draws the money earned by his sons and daughters under 21."

What avail our exports, our tariffs, our dividends, if they rise out of these treasons against God? All gains are losses, all riches are poverties, so long as the soul is left to rot down. What the friends of mercy are pleading, is the old, old plea of the Friend of Children—the plea of him who cried out, "Be not afraid of them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both body and soul in hell."

The poor remnant of these young toilers, they who do not crumble down in an early death, or drift to the gutter or the brothel, are left, alas! to become fathers and mothers.

Fathers and mothers, forsooth! What sort of fatherhood and motherhood can we hope for from these children robbed of childhood, from these children with the marrow sucked out of their bones and the beauty run out of their faces? Tragical is it beyond words to think that any of these poor human effigies should ever escape to engender their kind and to send on a still more pitiable progeny. What child worthy of the name can spring from the loins of these withered effigies of men? What babe worthy of the name can be mothered in the side of this wasted and weakened woman who has given her virgin vitality to the Moloch of the mill? And what wonder that, if expelled from the factory as no longer competent to be a cog or a pulley in the vast machine, they have no ambition but to sit idly in the sun? What wonder that the commonwealth, having fostered these dull degenerates, should be forced to care for them in her almhouses, her jails, her asylums? What wonder that only the cheapest and coarsest pleasures can stir their numb spirits? The things of the soul which they have missed, they will never know that they have

missed. They sit idly in the sun, a sorrowful type of the savage created by civilization, a sad protest against civilization—the starved, the stunted, the stunned, who speak no protest!

Well does Emerson cry out, "Give us worse cotton, but give us better men!" Well does Carlyle cry out, "Deliver me those rickety, perishing souls of infants, and let the cotton trade take its chances." What boots a social order that makes thousands of degenerates as the by-product of its exquisite linens and delicate muslins? Must we take our civilization on such terms as this? Must thousands fall and perish that a few may soar and shine? Let us rather go back to the clout of the savage, for "the body is more than raiment." The savage, the grim son of the forest, has at least a light step, a sound body, a brood of lusty children, and a treasure of poetic legend and song. But our savage of civilization, what of him? Look at his wasted body, his empty face, his beauty-robbed existence. Men are such cravens before custom that they often think a thing right because it has been long in existence. But child labor has about it

no halo of antiquity. It is a thing of yesterday—a sudden toadstool in the infernal garden. It shot up with the coming of steam and loom at the end of the eighteenth century. England began to fight the villainy in 1802, yet today the black shadow of it lies wide upon America.

The factory, we are told, must make a certain profit, or the owners (absentee proprietors generally, living in larded luxury), will complain. Therefore the president is goaded on by the directors. He in turn whips up the overseer; the overseer takes it out of the workers. So the long end of the lash cuts red the backs of the little children. Need we wonder, then, that cotton-factory stock gives back portly profits—twenty-five, thirty-five, yes, even fifty per cent? It pays, my masters, to grind little children into dividends! And the silks and muslins do not show the stain of blood, although they are splashed with scarlet on God's side.

Let it not be understood, however, that no hand is reached out to save these children lured to their ruin by the Pied Piper of Greed. Not a cotton mill state in the South but has its child labor committee and devoted

bands of men and women consecrated to the extermination of the evil. A new and more courageous attitude on the part of the press is also exemplified by the following editorial contained in the *Atlanta Ruralist*, June 15, 1913, the comment being occasioned by the murder of a 13-year-old girl in the basement of the building where she was employed:

"The crime is not the sin of an individual, however dastardly. It is the deed of the public who permitted social conditions which made the final act possible. In behalf of innocent childhood and intelligent, well-developed fathers and mothers of generations yet to come, we demand laws which will effectually prevent continuous child labor. Every Southern legislator who hereafter votes against the enactment of such protective measures we brand as a potential murderer accessory before the fact."

It may well be that the historians of progress will give chief credit to the Southern champions of the child, for not only is their fight the bitterest, but it is being waged without the aid that there was every reason to expect.

The church of the South, its steeples in the

shadow of the mill, instead of hurling anathema against this treason to "the least of these," too often stands complacent, acquiescent, silent. And so the men and women of mercy and rescue find themselves hindered by the icy indifference of organized religion, as well as by the iron opposition of vested interests. "Rob us of child labor and we will take our mills from your state." This is the frequent threat of the mill owners in the chambers and lobbies of legislation. And, alas! we are in a civilization where such a threat avails.

Nor, even when victories are won, is there rest for these friends of mercy. A law on the statute books is not always a law on the factory floor. Some inspectors are vigilant and quick with conscience. Some mills desire to keep the law. But others are crooked; they have their forged and perjured certificates, their double pay-rolls—one for the inspector, another for the counting-house. They have, also, the device of bringing children in as "mothers' helps," giving the mothers a few more pennies for the baby fingers.

Hard masters of mills, shiftless or helpless

parents, even misguided children themselves, all conspire to hold the little slaves to the wheel. Yes, even the children are taught to lie about their age, and their tongues are ever ready with the glib rehearsal. Some mills keep a lookout for the inspector, and at the danger signal the children scurry like rats to hide in attics, to crouch in cellars, behind bales of cotton, under heaps of old machinery.

But God's battle has begun.

III

LITTLE SLAVES OF THE LAMP

IT is in the glass factory, perhaps, that the child is pushed most hopelessly under the blind hammer of greed. Go to the glass-works of West Virginia and Pennsylvania and amid the roar and the glare and the torrid heat, gaze on the scorching and shriveling children clustered about the red-hot hives of the furnaces. By night and by day they are there, running constant chance of being burnt and blinded by fragments of molten glass splintering through the room—little workers always wilting in the fierce heat, oftentimes forced to breathe powdered glass as it sleets in the air. Gaze on the haggard, hurrying young creatures harried through hours of intense, monotonous work; their bodies parched, their sleep-robbed eyes blinded by the intolerable glow of furnaces and seared by the insufferable heat; the tissues of their tender bodies, inside and outside, rankling with the cruel fog of the powdered glass.

Think, comfortable reader, how you would feel if forced to work in the hottest days of summer, when men are prostrated even while walking across a quiet street; think how much you would feel like working in the heated chamber of the Turkish bath, where an attendant gives you iced water to sip and keeps a cold pack on your head; and then think of children working in just such deadly heat from ten to sixteen hours by day or by night. Does it not recall the damned children of Calvin's hell: "The damned as lumps of red fire, and they boiling and louping for pain in a dungeon of everlasting brimstone?" Does it not recall the vision of hell proclaimed from old-time pulpits? "Listen, there is a sound like a kettle boiling. The blood is seething in the scalded veins of that boy. The brain is bubbling and boiling in his head. The marrow is burning in his bones." Has it been reserved for the twentieth century to give a kind of reality on earth to the wild, hideous conceptions of the old hells of the iron creeds?

Thousands of little suffering wage-slaves are caught into this dreadful trade, and chiefly upon soil consecrated to freedom by

the groans and prayers of the awful winter at Valley Forge. The Virginias, however, are well entitled to share Pennsylvania's evil eminence.

There is a legend of a Chinese bellmaker who gave his daughter to the porcelain vats that he might cast a bell that would vibrate the delight and the despair of perfect music. Looking on the exquisite purity, the delicate radiance of the manifold things of glass that minister to our need, and thinking of the human life burnt out in the glass factories that these beautiful bright things may be—these crystal drinking cups, these praying windows, these heaven-searching lenses—one feels that, like the mad Chinese bellmaker, we may be sacrificing for this loveliness something more precious than we get. Beauty is dear at the price of flesh and blood.

The making of glass is one of the ancient crafts of men. This "ice-stone," as it was called of old, was known before weary hands hewed out the stones of Cheops. Whether or not the art was the chance discovery of the wayfaring Phoenicians, heating their pots on a sandy seashore, the art certainly was early given to men. Saved from the ravages of

the years, we have a glass vase that held the wine of Sargon, one of the oldest kings of history. And we have still a lion's head of blue and green glass fashioned for a perished palace by some cunning hand that wrought in Thebes three thousand years before the Cross. In Alexandria, artisans were working glass when Aristotle was studying in her vast and now long vanished library; in Rome the tread of Nero and Caesar rang on pavements of glass; and panels of glass made beautiful the chambers where lay at night their uneasy heads.

In our own land one of the earliest industries established by the American colonists was the making of glass, and the blast of the glass factory has never since been absent from our continent. The last twenty years, with invention and improvement playing clap-in-and-clap-out, have revolutionized the glass trade. From 1890 to 1900, glass-making increased fifty-two per cent., until now some sixty-two million dollars are turning over and over in the work. For one item, seven hundred thousand gross of glass jars are made yearly, and one firm manufactures seventy tons of glass a day. One might

think that with all this capital at hand, with sales of glassware assured by increasing demand, with all the experience of the ages behind us in methods of working, with all the new machinery pushing into the factories —with all these things one might think that ungrown boys might be spared from this cruel craft; that the children need no longer go into the roaring ovens. Yet no other industry, except the textile, gathers so many children into its crater of death. Seven and a half thousand boys are in this vortex of Vesuvius, about thirteen per cent. of all the glassworkers of the nation.

Look into one of the big glass factories and see the place sprinkled with children. Even the cyclopedias naïvely picture and enumerate the parts given to the boy in the glassworks. In the centre of the room stand the red-hot, recking furnaces girdled with a circle of small doors. In front of these doors the glassblowers and their boy minions are stationed. Sometimes as many as fifty boys are shuttling about the furnaces. With hollow iron blowpipes the blower swabs up a little portion of the molten glass to blow into a globe. The globes are slapped and twirled

on the bench, then thrust into molds, and blown further into shape. A "cracker-off" boy deftly taps from the blower's pipe the "icicle" of glass dangling from the end. A "holding-mold" boy opens and shuts the molds. A "snapping-up" boy takes the unnecked ware and holds it to the "glory-hole" in the furnace to reheat it so that the "carry-in" boy can rush it to the finisher, where another boy races with it to the annealing oven to temper it for packing. Every motion is hurried; every boy is a darting automaton in his little rat-run of service. No halting, no lagging, no resting: nothing waits.

The United States Bureau of Labor, commenting upon one phase of this furious activity, says:

"Into the work of the snapping-up boy there enters the hardship of looking into the bright, glaring light of the glory-hole. . . . Not only is constant walking necessary, but also constant arm movement, some bending, and, in general, an incessant activity of the whole body. . . . In a Pennsylvania establishment, where the temperature on the outside was 88 degrees, the temperature at the

point where the snap-up rubs off the excess glass was 100 degrees; in front of the glory-hole it was 140 degrees. . . . The speed rate of the snapping-up boy is fixed by the output of the shop, and in case of such small ware as one ounce and under he must work with great rapidity."

The carry-in boy, loaded and anxious has perhaps the most mulish task of all. He must carry the red-hot bottles or chimneys on his abestos shovel, with always an added danger of the slipping ware or the spattering glass; must hurry with his unstable, tormenting load on a slow run. Men can seldom be found to do this dangerous service. Indeed, the blower prefers to have boys at his command, for his work is piece-work, generally, and upon the speed and sureness of his assistants depend his returns. Men are not so easily impressed as boys with the need for speed, nor are they so amenable to the curt persuasion of the oath; and each urgent, eager blower is the tyrannic Setebos of his bench, whose will is instant law.

In one factory observed by Mr. Owen Lovejoy, the distance from bench to oven was one hundred feet, and the carry-in

boys made seventy-two trips an hour. In eight hours they thus ran twenty-two miles, half the time with a dangerous load, always in a Sahara of heat, always in a withering drift of glassy dust. It is a pity that some of the college men in their useless circling of the cinder path to cultivate "wind," could not step in and relieve some of these ten- and twelve-year-olds, reeking with sweat, stumbling in sleep, at their pitiless work in this deadening Afric atmosphere.

After the bottle, or tumbler, or chimney is made there may still be much business for little fingers in etching, polishing, tying, and packing. One factory pasha "points with pride" to the persistence and patience of a weak and wizened boy whose task is tying glass stoppers on bottles. When only ten years old the child began his monotonous, machine-like, ten-hours-a-day work at his low stool. He gets through with three hundred dozen bottles a day. Hour by hour his shoulders are arching, his chest is hollowing, his limbs are withering, his face is growing empty, his eyes are becoming lustreless. He gives his strength, his youth, his all—and he gets four and a half dollars a week.

Since the era of machinery has added child labor to the evils of civilization, child labor has been synonymous with child robbery. Joy, health, education—the present and the future—are all staked on this throw of the moment, in the game where Greed plays with loaded dice and the little player loses all. Statistics show that many of the children of the glass factories are absolutely illiterate, while many have the merest smattering of knowledge. Day-school is impossible; night-school is beyond their energies. And yet education is vaunted as the supporting granite of our national life. Should we not, in merest fair play of assassins, give the child command of the tools of education that will give him at least a fighting chance in the fortunes of the world? As it is, parents, often illiterate themselves; society, busied with pay-rolls and poodle dogs; and factory owners, itching for dividends, all conspire to take the child in his pinafore and melt him into dollars and cents.

Said one complacent superintendent of a great glass plant: "I shall oppose every attempt at improved child-labor laws. Some people are born to work with their brains and

some with their hands. Look at these," pointing to a line of " glass " boys already squeezed dry of the juice of life, " they are not fitted to do anything else." In this same spirit, defending the infamous traffic in the children before an educational committee, the superintendent of a glassworks declared that child labor " is necessary to the interests of commerce." What is this new god Commerce, throned upon his pyramid of skulls? Have we among us a monstrous Something, a measureless Maw that must be continually crammed with the youth and strength and virtue and joy of our children? Is this civilization? Then let civilization perish! Let the walls of the cities crumble; let the ancient deserts return!

This contempt for children finds its choicest expression in the cordons of barbed wire which some glass factory owners have been known to use for the imprisonment of their young workers. Only one more turn of the screw would put chains on the legs again, as the Nottingham cotton manufacturers were wont to hold their runaways in England's obsolete factory infernos.

Night-work, now made possible in so many

trades by the brilliancy of electric light, allows glass factories to run two shifts of boy labor. Hence sixty per cent. of the thousands of boys at the "fire" work at night every other week, always in the abnormal, monotonous heat, and always at the highest nervous pressure in alertness and exactness. There can be no relaxation till after the shift is over. What wonder, then, if utter exhaustion and intense thirst make boy and man turn to stimulants! Very often one boy is kept running all night to fetch drinks from the ever present saloon. Very often the glass-worker degenerates into the confirmed sot, as does many a worker at some of the other frightful trades of civilization which race him at demonic pressure for a few hours, only to leave him limp and lifeless, so that he turns blindly to the false and futile revival at the ever convenient corner groggery.

What wonder that the enforced "laying off" for a day, or a week, to gather strength, adds to the ranks of vagabonds at the saloon counter! and that "hands" are scarce at the factories after the debauch that always follows pay-day! What wonder that in such environment, and with such piteous provoca-

tion to drink and "remember their miseries no more," we find young boys even going the drunkard's way! Of one hundred and eighty-five boys in a certain glass factory only ten at the end of a season's "fire" were not confirmed drinkers of intoxicants. What is this if not proof incontrovertible that intemperance has a social cause and must have a social cure? The groggery will no longer be the refuge of the hopeless when we have rooted out the hopeless drudgery of the world.

And where is the liquor drinker, unstable at the nerve-centre, always deteriorating in morals, who does not rapidly gravitate to sinks of perdition? So well do the older glassmakers know the evils attending their trade that a parent will not let his own son enter the glassworks. "I'd rather see my boy dead than working here," declared one glassblower. "You might as well give a boy to the devil at once as give him to the glass factory."

Here is a family record, one of many: A boy of thirteen was in jail for vagrancy. For three years he had been working in a glass factory, where his two elder brothers

had also gone to work when they were ten years old. At the end of his term of detention the little prisoner was sent back to his glass factory once more. He again refused to work, was turned out of home, and again arrested for vagrancy. What future is possible for this child, who, while yet in the gristle, is sated with work, is cast out of the dingy den he calls "home," and is familiar with the baneful atmosphere of jail-life and jail-mates—a boy with no shred of education, and now with neither ability nor desire to learn anything? Can anyone blame the poor, dulled, duped effigy of a boy for dumbly demanding the rest and play stolen from him at the early slavery of the furnace? Has not society earned its punishment, the duty of supporting him in future as a defective, or vagrant, or perhaps as a dangerous criminal? And this boy is only a type of hundreds.

Is it not strange, therefore, that only the sons of dead glassmakers, or helpless children "run in" from orphan asylum or "reformatories," are in the glassworks? Orphan asylums in New York City and Philadelphia have long been fountains of supply for these

pools of Erebus. Boys with their own so-called homes—those joyless shanties for bolting down food or snatching a little sleep—are often swelled into premature importance and insolence by the too early acquired independence of wage earning. But worse is the state of the betrayed " reformatory " boys utterly without home.

One of the saddest phases of all this child labor is the fact that the little ones are frequently thrown out into the society of callous and hardened men—men reeking with "ugly curses and uglier mirth." It is heartsickening to see a boy limping along with his burden of glass, puffing a rank old pipe, blasé as a Bowery loafer, and joining perhaps in the mechanical curses and lewd jests of the hour. A principal of a school in a " glass " town of Pennsylvania says, " My observation is that when a boy goes into a glass factory at fourteen years of age, by the time he is fifteen or sixteen he is too foul-mouthed to associate with decent people." So the boys of the glassworks tend to become a band of Ishmaelites. Society, which lets them drift into these reeking sewers of service, cannot receive them when they come out with souls

befouled. The factory owner has no use for them but to grind their labor into his dividends. All he wants is the marrow of their bones. Abandoned by society, the boys tend to become the foes of society. Thus, year after year, we are creating the very criminals and vagrants we cry out against in our pulpits and public prints.

The factory blasts the moral nature, blights the mind of the child, and sows through his body the seeds of disease. Death always sits at the right hand of Mammon.

The shadow of the grave falls first upon the night-workers. From five or six in the evening until two or three next morning is an average night-shift. By day or by night, the boys, leaving the reek of the furnaces and ovens, pass in a perspiration from the superheated atmosphere into the cool of out-of-doors—sometimes into the icy cold of winter. Mothers of boys who go into this devouring work complain that the children are nearly always suffering from colds induced by these tremendous changes of temperature. For, of course, being at low vitality, they are often chilled at once. Sometimes the yawning saloon gives them its destroying comfort and

shelter; sometimes they crouch beside the furnaces; sometimes they lurk in empty doorways.

A child of fourteen, a little old worker with seven years in the glassworks to his credit, was found by a school-teacher in Pittsburg, with his head buried in his arms, fast asleep on a doorstep. His hands and clothes were covered with factory burns. His home was far from the works, and the exhausted little fellow had been sleeping for hours out in the chill night. Another boy of twelve, in Pennsylvania, who can neither read nor write, has been a worker for years, and often does not go home at all after his night's work, but sleeps in any corner, and hangs around till time to work again. Such a boy is ripening, of course, for a common loafer or criminal.

If the boy of the glassworks lives through these strains coming during the most excitable and perilous years of his life, he is likely to be a nervous wreck, if indeed he is not a victim of the dread plague of civilization, tuberculosis. Nervous dyspepsia, rheumatism, pneumonia, and tuberculosis dog his steps. The lungs being forever lacerated by

the imbedding of the flying spicules of glass which are continually inhaled, the system being depleted by overstrain and lack of rest, the path is made easy for the waiting bacilli, and often the tragedy is brief. The step is short from the crimson purr of the furnace to the chilly walls of the grave.

Is this the "Christian civilization" we compute in our census returns and brag of in our Bible classes? Is this the religion we carry to the Congo, the Ganges, and the Hoang-Ho? Is it Christ or Mammon that stands today on the corners of the streets, saying, "Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not"?

The American citizen realizing these outrages on humanity, cries out: "There is a law to protect even the animals. Is there no law against ruining our children?" Yes, there are struggling and abortive laws—laws that protect children on this side of the Ohio River, perhaps, and that deliver them to the jaws of death on the other side; laws also that the greed of capitalists and the need of parents conspire to cheat. The National Child Labor Committee demands that no child under fourteen shall be employed in

any glass factory, and that no child under sixteen shall be allowed to work at night. And this demand should be made a federal law, so that a removal of a few miles will no longer turn a crime into a decency—so that the mere crossing of a state line will no longer transfer a child-killer from the halter of the law to the halo of the laudable. Or does virtue, indeed, depend upon arbitrary lines on a map, upon the bend of rivers, and the trend of mountain chains?

The horror of this whole glassworks tragedy becomes increasingly poignant when it is robbed of all color of necessity, and exposed as a shocking expression of unrelieved greed. No less an authority than the *National Glass Budget* points out that "the introduction of automatic devices has changed the modern factory requirements to such an extent that the glass factory which today requires the work of the small boy is operated in the crudest, the most primitive, the most expensive and antiquated manner." And the auditor of one of the largest glass concerns in the country says, "When you consider the ease with which steel and iron are handled in the great metal factories, and then watch

little boys still carrying hot glass in the bottle-houses, it looks extremely crude."

In Ohio, Illinois and Indiana, glass factories have come into line with the laws of their states and the laws of progress, and are using machinery instead of small boys. Thus by preferring man to Mammon, work is beginning to grow endurable in this beautiful and increasingly necessary industry.

Let there be an irresistible surge of earnest wills to hasten the day that shall shut the gates of the glass mills in the faces of the children now flung hourly to the purring tigress of the oven.

IV

THE SWEAT-SHOP INFERNO

A CERTAIN Brahman was descanting on the consideration due to animals and affirming that he never destroyed one. "The law," said he, "bids us walk carefully and with our eyes down, so as not to step on the humblest ant." A scientist handed him a miscroscope. Looking through it, he saw a host of little animals on the fig he was about to eat, and in the water he was about to drink. He was astounded and saddened. He was then told that he could keep the microscope for any use he might have for it. With a flash of joy the Brahman tightened his grip on the glass, hurled it crashing on a rock, and then departed with a light heart. At one easy stroke he had destroyed the truth and saved his superstition!

We have in our own civilization thousands who are mental brothers to this clever Brahman—thousands who are determined to live in a rosy illusion about life. They are determined not to see the injustice and poverty

that press so heavily upon the millions who do the hard work of the world. If by chance a well-wisher gives them a glimpse of the wrongs under the crust of our civilization, they cry, "alarmist!" "pessimist!"—thinking to destroy the unwelcome truth by destroying the unwelcome truth-bringer. They try to blot out the sun by pulling down the blinds! But even these comfortable moles will not deny the shame of the sweat-shop inferno.

Long before Hannah made a coat for little Samuel, women sat in the home at garment-making. The sweated sewing in the tenement home today—a family or more slaving in one room—is only a belated following of this custom of the ages. But the leisurely sewing of the old times was far away from the nerve-racking work of our hurried age. The slow ways are gone. In unaired rooms, mothers and fathers sew by day and by night. And the children are called in from play to drive and drudge beside their elders. The strength and speed and skill of the hand workers are matched against the power and swiftness and cunning of the modern machine-equipped

factory. Those in the home sweat-shops must work cheaper than those in the factory sweat-shops if they would drain work from the factory, which has already skinned the wage down to a miserable pittance.

"Sweat-shop" is a word which the conscience of the nation must yet make obsolete, as it made obsolete its old compeer, slave-pen. A sweat-shop is a place where the worker is at the mercy of middlemen, where his life-blood is sweated out by the pressure of the profit-sucking contractors piled on top of him. A clothing dealer, for instance, orders from a wholesaler one thousand suits of clothes of all sizes. A contractor takes the order and "subs" it out to smaller contractors, who in turn "sub" it out to the tenement workers. Each middleman demands his profit; so the wage of the workers is cut very thin. The workers must press in their children to help. The older ones can go to the somewhat regulated factories; the younger ones must slave in the sweated homes. Thus the load falls upon the ones least able to bear it—upon the backs of the little children at the base of the labor pyramid.

But why should we complain? Is our system not based on profit? The oppressors of labor are concerned in making money, not in making men. Why should they hesitate to mix the marrow of children into their minted gold? Nevertheless, let their ill-got money be marked money. Let us strike from their unholy dollars the figure of Liberty, and stamp thereon the cross-bones and the skull!

The great unskilled masses of every large city—foreigners ignorant of the language and customs of the country, as well as our own ineffectual and unskilled legions—all these hungry and shivering toilers, claiming the right to live, are forced into poorly paid tasks, tasks that can be easily learned and that too often demand only the demoralizing slop-work that marks cheap labor. The clothing trade, with its subdivisions of labor, its system of piece or "team" work, offers the easiest opportunity to the untrained fingers of the needy. The regular factory gives out its coat in nineteen stints, its shirt in seven. What cannot be done by machinery, what is too ill-paid for even the regular factory, is thrust out to the home factory. Thus it is

that unbelievable sweating is carried on in the pitiful places called "homes," where the needy are crowded into the sties and warrens of our cities, some of the proudest cities yet ushered into history. Thus it is that this trade of preparing clothes for the body is the most degraded and the most unguarded of all our industries.

The Bureau of Labor, in its report on woman and child wage earners in the men's ready-made clothing industry, explains the exact nature of the drudgery:

"The term 'finishing' is loosely used to denote the hand sewing requisite to complete the garment after the operating and basting have been done, and it consists, for the most part, of felling the lining to the cloth of the garment where this has not already been done by the machine. . . . Coat finishing usually consists of felling the lining at the armholes, at the bottom and at the neck; sometimes the cloth turned up at the bottom is fancy cross-stitched; frequently the undercollar is also felled on and, on the higher grade garments, the collar 'stoted,' (a distinctive sort of felling). Frequently the finisher is required to pull bastings also. . . . The finisher on pants

has to line the pants at the waist-line, fell the lining at the top, tack it at the pocket, and sometimes fell the pocket to the seam; put the rubber composition in the portion of the leg which is turned up to form the bottom, and turn up and baste the bottoms—although the bottoms may be felled by a separate shop hand. Very frequently she has to sew the buckles to the buckle strap and sew on the buttons."

Mark, too, the sinister implications contained in the following comments made by the government investigators:

"Home finishing is not confined to a *cheap grade of garments* nor to such as are made by contractors. It is resorted to by the makers of *all grades* of clothing, by leading manufacturers who maintain large inside shops, as well as by the small contractors.

"Almost all the finishing was done in kitchens and bedrooms.

"Because of the long periods of idleness when they can earn nothing these women make the most of the busy season when it comes, and when plenty of work is to be had the combined labor of the whole family, all day and often at night, is utilized. They

take as many garments as they can possibly secure, and then work *unlimited* hours and strain to the utmost to complete their tasks."

Use and beauty—these should be the ends of all human effort. But the competitive struggle swings us away from this high ground, and plunges us into a quagmire fight for cheap goods and cheap labor. So everywhere there is effort to whittle down the wage. The contractor, or middleman, pushed on by a superior behind him, has only one thought—how to get his work done as cheaply as possible. "Much for little" is his golden text. He will avoid the expense of factory space, factory overseers, and factory machinery; also the expense of light, fuel, and storage. By shoving his work into the homes of the workers and making them assume these expenses, by forcing the workers to bid against one another, in their workshop homes, by continual hounding for haste, and by ingenious dockings for tardiness, dirt-spots, loose stitches, and all the other petty mistakes of dreary, exacting needledom, the middleman squeezes out his sweated gains, his usury of flesh and blood. The workers find themselves forced into long hours and

driven to take the help of their children whose roof and loaf are at stake. Is it any wonder that, under this exploitation of young and old, the garment-makers of the nation are the most beaten down of all our toiling millions?

Fourteen to sixteen hours is the usual stretch of this long working day. A child frequently earns only one cent an hour; while the sweater figures so that a woman shall not earn more than ten cents. The average income of the whole family is five dollars and seventy cents a week. Sometimes in a rush order the elders can sleep only five hours of the twenty-four. An order must be finished on time and be back on time, though all other activities of the house should cease. The sewing machines must whir, the fingers must fly. Little and big must toil, ever hastening, never resting, to get the work out and to get home more work to hold the job. For worse than all work is no work; and the slack spells may fall on any day.

Poverty walls the children from play and school. When the wolf whines at the door, all hands must hold the bar. Every finger can do a little. Children of five, six and

seven can sew buttons (twelve to a pair) on endless piles of trousers ("pants" is the tenement name for them). A girl can run a sewing machine all day for a number of years. She may imperil her health, and destroy her usefulness as a mother of children. But never mind: she can sit in a corner by-and-by and work eyelets in shirt-fronts at four cents a dozen shirts. A young boy, bones still soft, may run a buttonhole machine, one foot only on the treadle. He is threatened with curvature of the spine owing to constant pressure upon one side of his body. But never mind: there are hospitals for those who get too crooked. And, as one of these tired mothers said, "The graveyard always stands the friend of the poor."

The sweat-shop army works long hours, and does work necessary for the comfort of us all. We have seen how it is paid; let us see how it is housed. In a true civilization, property should be based on service, and the workers would live in beautiful homes. Only idlers would live in hovels. But what happens to our useful needle-folk? They are often driven into ramshackle buildings to be near neighbors to the rats in the sewers and the

worms in the rotting wood. In these homes, discomfort is lord chamberlain, and disease the bedfellow. The houses are ice-boxes in winter and ovens in summer. Every door is death's door; for the bacilli of consumption are a dust on the walls and ceilings. Three out of five of these doomed workers who are making our clothes are led down to death by the White Plague.

Are there not other places with cleaner, lighter, airier rooms? Yes; but the sweat-shoppers must be near the work that gives them their short leave to be alive. The sewing trade is highly specialized; it is spasmodic and shifting. Therefore the contract shops must be close together, and close to an enormous central market. The locality is thus conditioned by the trade. The tenements provide the accommodations that the scant, uncertain wage of the worker can command. He must be where he can pay the rent that is his terror—the rent that the "cockroach" landlord (the subletting landlord) is forever raising as the slender fortunes of the needle-folk go up. Only those who know the hard grind can understand the dread of dispossession forever haunting the minds of the work-

ers living on the crumbling verge of the abyss. Food and clothes they can minimize; but the rent-taker, like death, must have his dole.

These unlit, unlovely homes, which the sweated sewers struggle so hard to hold, have only an average of three rooms. Thousands of rooms in these tenements depend upon the grimy air-shafts for their scanty light. The room where the light comes in must be the place for cooking, eating, and working—perhaps also the place of sleeping, with mattresses spread out on the floor at night for boarders. For even these three rooms must often be shared with boarders to reduce the rent. The average rent is nine dollars a month. The average monthly income of the husband (if husband there be) is only fifteen dollars. So it takes over two weeks' work to pay one month's rent. As the average family is four or five, it needs no higher mathematics to see that every expense must be whittled, and every asset made to count, if even hunger is shut out.

Some of the instances of our crowding suffer lack of belief by reason of their apparent incredibility. In one square mile of

New York tenements, owned by church corporations and millionaire drones, over six hundred thousand people are crowded, perhaps the most densely packed mound of human ants upon this planet. One investigator found, in a block off Hester Street, a room twelve by eight and five and a half feet high, in which nine persons slept and cooked and worked. In another room, located in a basement, were living, working, and sleeping two men with their wives, a girl of fourteen, a boy of seventeen, two single men, two women, and four boys just entering their "teens." Packed together in the cellar room were fourteen human beings. What delicacy or decency of life is possible in such dehumanizing homes? It is in such mockeries of home that Drudgery rears its spiked crown. It is in such poverties that men drift beastward, women sink to haghood, and children wax old before they have tasted youth.

All the year in New York and in other cities you may watch children radiating to and from such pitiful homes. Nearly any hour on the East Side of New York City you can see them—pallid boy or spindling girl—their

Drawn by E. Cary Kilvert

BENT UNDER A HEAVY LOAD OF GARMENTS PILED ON HEAD AND SHOULDERS, THE MUSCLES OF THE WHOLE FRAME IN A LONG STRAIN

faces dulled, their backs bent under a heavy load of garments piled on head and shoulders, the muscles of the whole frame in a long strain. The boy always has bowlegs and walks with feet wide apart and wobbling. Here, obviously, is a hoe-man in the making.

Once at home with the sewing, the little worker sits close to the inadequate window, struggling with the snarls of the thread, or shoving the needle through the unwieldly cloth. Even if by happy chance the small worker goes to school, the sewing which he puts down at the last moment in the morning waits for his return. Never again should one complain of buttons hanging by a thread; for tiny tortured fingers have doubtless done their little ineffectual best. And for the lifting of burdens, this giving of youth and strength, this sacrifice of all that should make childhood radiant, a child may add to the family purse from fifty cents to one dollar and a half a week.

In the rush time of the year, preparing for the changes of seasons or for the great "white sales," there are no idle fingers in the sweat-shops. A little child of "seven times one" can be very useful in threading needles,

in cutting the loose threads at the ends of seams, and in pulling out bastings. To be sure, the sewer is docked for any thread left in, or for any stitch broken by the little bungling fingers. The light is not good, but baby eyes must "look sharp."

A dismal room lit by one window, a weary mother sewing, with piles of garments heaped on bed and floor—this is the last scene that will stay in the memory of a little New York tot whose fate should be carved in warning bronze. One night, to help her mother, she was busily ripping bastings with a pair of big scissors, her face held close to her work. At a sudden jerk she rammed a scissor-blade into her left eye. At the free hospital she could say only, "Me was des helping mamma." Several experimenting young doctors, by the careless use of an astringent put out the other eye. So the child is blind for life for "des helping mamma." Down in this dim underworld, poverty lays hourly on the children squalors and hungers, and in freakish moments strikes them with the indignity of accident.

In the faint light of grimy, vile-smelling rooms, pressing up to the window, or strain-

ing under the ghostly gas-jet, sit the tired mothers and children of the tenements, stitching garments for a city and a nation. Contrast a December night in these homes that are never in order, and never have any leisure, with a winter night in a hundred homes you know, where mothers, born under happier stars, sit before cozy fires with their laughing little folk about them at games and songs and books. "Home and mother!" These old syllables strike tender chords in the heart. Yet we have desert regions in our cities where there are children, but no home, no mother. "Home and mother!" Our grim system forces hundreds of thousands to lose the meanings of these sweet old words.

We are told that we must "maintain the home." A soldierly phrase, a phrase of good command! But let us first see to it that our homes are fit to be maintained. What sort of homes are we maintaining in the working quarters of our great cities? What sort of homes are those where the utmost will to work cannot insure roof and loaf; where leisure and beauty are left out of life; where the child must leave the cradle only to con-

cern itself with earning niggardly pennies to keep its little empty life agoing?

Besides working at machine or with needle, there is still another industry for the little daughters of the tenements. The mother is always busy or else is away, packing her bundles to or from the contractor's shop. The older girl, therefore, must assume the work and care of the family. She becomes the "little mother," washing, scrubbing, cooking, caring for the other children; carrying coal and ashes, water; doing the errands and shopping for the young ones below her and the elders above. While other children are playing with dolls and mud pies, these "little mothers" are cooking, and tending baby. "My baby's teething; I had to walk with my baby all night, so's't mamma could sleep," said a heavy-eyed nine-year-old. "I had to walk, cause I'd go to sleep if I stopped walking." Another "little mother," taken to the hospital, would not lie straight in her cot that first time in her life she had ever slept alone. "If I can hug the pillow on my cuddle arm," she said, "I don't feel so lonesome; 'cause then I can make believe it's my baby."

Is it not a cruel civilization that allows

WHILE OTHER CHILDREN ARE PLAYING WITH DOLLS AND MUD PIES, THESE "LITTLE MOTHERS" ARE COOKING, AND TENDING BABY

little hearts and little shoulders to strain under these grown-up responsibilities, while in the same city a pet cur is jeweled and pampered and aired on a fine lady's velvet lap on the beautiful boulevards?

Some of the children in the factories of our great cities, in spite of false certificates as to age, are "rounded up" by truant officers and forced into school until they reach their working age at fourteen. But the little children at the home sweat-shop, hidden in dark tenements and huddled at their needles, may reach their majority without being run down.

What is going to protect our homes, and delivers these little sewing-girls from the body of this death? What, indeed, is going to deliver all the weary and heavy laden from their unjust burdens? What will ever take the despair and danger out of the lives of the toiling millions? Nothing but the rise of men and women, resolute and consecrated—men and women sworn to sweep away this system of greed, this devouring of man by man. Love and Justice must find a working form down in this abyss of labor now ruled by Chaos and brute Chance.

V

THE COST OF COAL

IF all the coal in the mines of the United States were packed into one solid cube, it would loom against the blue a stupendous body many miles in dimension. The falling of such an immense mass into the deepest sea would flood the land, write new boundaries for the tides, and leave a mountain of coal higher than Chimborazo piled on Chimborazo, ascending through cloud and sky. But this coal is deposited in many different fields—in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Colorado, etc., the Appalachian region being the great source of the anthracite supply. Over two hundred thousand men and boys are at work in Pennsylvania alone, rending the enormous mass with iron and dynamite, hoisting it to the surface with ponderous machinery, crushing and assorting it for range and furnace, and wheeling it away to every city and hamlet in the nation.

Perhaps the boldest industrial lie ever

uttered, certainly the one most skilfully circulated, is the insistent suggestion that the coal-miner is a highly paid, intractable roysterer who is never satisfied. Poor slave! Not only is his wage meagre and ever shifting with the fortunes of the coal-drift, but he is further handicapped by long gaps of enforced idleness, frequently getting only one hundred and fifty days' work in the year. Thus he is ever kept on the perilous brink of hunger, harrassed by debt and damned by uncertainty. Need we wonder that the little children are soon snatched up from play and school and pressed into the mines in the forlorn hope of fortifying the door against the wolf? One need not enlarge "the rhetoric of their miseries" to demonstrate that here is a piteous story of oppression and scraping poverty, of need going down before greed.

But one must follow the coal-miner to his home, and look there upon his poverties of mind and body, or walk the streets of his "towns", if one would know the litany of his wrongs. Everywhere is an air of dejection, a feeling of impermanence. Everywhere is the disheartening look

that comes upon houses and lands in their last lapse toward discard and decay. The scene is as desolate as Dante's descending circles. Blasted tree-stumps start up grimly from the ground: yawning coal-pits blur and blacken the sides of hills once full of swaying trees, singing birds, and lowing cattle. High-piled dumps of culm, the gray refuse gutted from the mines by generations of miners, flank the pits and fill the hollows, or stretch in lifeless tablelands around the belching breakers that are forever vomiting forth more dead matter to stifle the discouraged life of all green and growing things. Streams, once running silver white, splashing with fish and banked with greenery and bloom, are now sucked under ground to imperil the mining-galleries below, or left to run sluggishly in parched and barren gullies rimmed with rock and slag, their waters poisoned with sulphur, inky with coal-dust, and reeking with the refuse of years. Torn surface veins and unsightly cave-ins further break the curving beauty of the hills.

Hideous, unstable-looking " breakers " loom beside the spuming pits. On the dreary levels or the gashed sides of the hills huddle the dis-

heartening shanties and shacks which the miners call "homes." Here, too, are the huge, cavernous company stores, with their sodden floors and grimy windows. These stores are the "Pluck-me's" of the miner's dramatic slang. Here also are the dilapidated saloons hung with vulgar prints and festooned with fly-specked tissue paper. Here are straggling back-lots fenced with a haphazard motley of barrel staves, scraps of rope and wire, fragments of iron sheathing, and boards from broken dry-goods boxes. The alleys and gutters are littered with junk and garbage—tin cans, bottles, old shoes, broken crockery, stray rags. Heaps of ashes and muck clutter lot and lane, and the unhidden sewage of the place trickles in the gutters. The stenches smell to heaven. Rambling goats and dogs and hens neighbor in the street; ducks and geese clack in the filthy ponds; and troops of unkempt, capering children find in this squalor all they know of the beauty of civilization and the joy of life.

In such an abomination of desolation, with a death-rate equalling the slums of cities, live the miners of the anthracite and bituminous

coal-fields. Their wretched houses could not have cost over four or five hundred dollars in the beginning. They are appraised by the assessors at only fifty or sixty dollars; yet they are rented out by the coal-barons at fifty or sixty dollars a year right along, the tenant being required to make his own repairs. Here are houses, gone to wreck, barely worth one hundred and fifty dollars, and yet a profit of fifty dollars—thirty-three and a third per cent.—is squeezed out of them! Here is rack-rent for you in free America!

Few of the miners own their homes—sometimes because of poverty; sometimes because the company that owns the land will sell none. But many miners feel forced to be renters, knowing as they do that in slack times the coal-barons give preference to those who are turning in revenue. And woe to the hapless miner who cannot keep up his rent-money, as the following excerpt from the Anthracite State Commission report will show:

"An old miner named Coll, who had been maimed and repeatedly injured during his nineteen years'

service in the Markle Company's mines—having lost one eye, had his ribs broken, his skull fractured, and one leg permanently disabled—testified that the company recently evicted him and his family, consisting of his wife, who was ill, her mother (one hundred years old, blind and feeble) and two adopted children, orphaned by mine accidents. On a cold and rainy day he was forced to take his family seven miles to Hazleton, where they found shelter in a damp unfurnished house. There his wife died. 'I buried her yesterday,' said the old man, who added that his wife's mother now appeared to be dying. After his leg had been so badly hurt, his fellow-miners collected for him $167, of which the Markle Coal Company at once took all but $25 for rent and supplies. * * * Mrs. Kate Burns testified that her husband was killed in the Markle mines, leaving her with five children. For six years she kept them at school by her work, part of which was done for the company, which retained her pay. She was occupying a house of two rooms. When her oldest boy was fourteen she sent him to the mines. On his first pay-day he received a bill of $396 for rent and coal. After her husband's death she had not been asked for rent; but she then learned that rent at the rate of $5.50 a month had been charged against her. Her other boys were put to work, but it took the family thirteen years (or until August, 1902) to pay the debt. Similar stories were told by others.

Anyone would suppose that houses which bring such thrifty returns would provide at least the comfort of the rich man's dog-kennel. But not so. In the bitter cold days the two stoves in the miner's home devour a ton of coal every week—coal gathered patiently by the women and children from the spat-out dumps of culm. But the cracks in wall and roof and floor let in the wind to drive comfort from the house.

In these monotonous repetends of houses—sixty often builded as one—we generally find a garret with a room or two below it. Here, crowded beyond any hope of privacy or convenience, is herded a family, often with "nine children and one at the breast." Among the foreign element, there is no home too small to take in its boarders, or to sublet a room to a family or more. The kitchen in these houses is the living-room where the grimy men must bathe every night, and where the meals must be cooked; where also the sewing, the laundry work, and the visiting must be done. Is it any wonder that the girls gravitate to the streets and that the men and boys drift to the saloons, as a refuge from the racket of babies, the clatter of housework,

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and the sharp tongue of the overworked household drudge?

Out of these cheerless cabins, these kennels of bareness and ugliness, the miner hurries in the dark of the morning from his breakfast of bread and coffee, swinging his dinner-pail of bread and bacon; or, in hard times, he hurries not infrequently with an empty dinner-pail in piteous bluff at keeping up appearances with his fellows.

To his comfortless shack he returns at nightfall from the long dark of the pits. Sometimes his supper is only bread and tea; while in the martyr days of a strike it may be only mush and water.

The roseate accounts of a coal-miner's ability to take out fifty tons of coal in a month at three dollars a ton do not mention that few men work a full month. It is the policy of the coal-barons to keep an excess of men in every mining-camp. Accidents, also, are continually occurring, and accidents enforce idleness. One-third of a month of work is the usual average. Then, too, there is an assistant he must pay, and powder that he must buy, his dockage that he must look out for, not to mention sharpening, oil, wicks,

and other necessities of work. Fortunate indeed is the miner who has a scant forty-seven dollars for his own even when his month is full. As his debt for supplies at the company store is taken from his pay before he gets it, and as his home is nearly always rented from the company, the coal-barons get most of the money back. Even the preachers of the gospel of thrift, they who mourn over the ravages of the saloon, must admit that the miner has little left for the pleasures of the cup.

And the dangers down in the deep, dark galleries of the earth—they are matched only by the dangers of those who go down to the sea in ships. Any day there may come an explosion of gas as from the buried volcanoes of Tophet; or a caving-in of the mine, crushing out the miner's life or walling him up in some chamber of these catacombs to perish through slow starvation; or the fans may suddenly stop, turning the underground abyss into a cavern of poisons; or yet again, some subterranean stream may roar in or a pent-up flood rush down, suffocating the miners like rats in the hold of a sinking ship.

Few families of the coal-mining communi-

ties but have their annals of some tragedy in the mines. Few there are that are not saving grimly toward the puny fund that is to give them decently to the friendly graveyard when the mines have done their worst for them, after the quick freak of accident or the slow creep of disease. Four fell terrors haunt these black abysses: asthma, rheumatism, pneumonia, consumption. Side by side with these forever stalks the Terror of Accident.

And for this hard hand-labor of hewing and heaving, and for this daring of disaster and disease, what is the miner's recompense? A wanderer from Mars, untrained in our cruel excuses for wrongs, would say that surely this sweaty and sooty brother must get an expert's wage. But how foolish! Only the overseer in the padded office-chair gets that. The robust, steadfast collier, with his broken months, can earn a daily average of only fifteen cents each for his household of six; while the State of Pennsylvania, having whittled expenses down to the lowest terms, finds that, with facilities for wholesale buying and storing of goods, it has to pay an average of twenty-eight cents a head for the support of the feeble-minded and helpless.

Thus labor fails to command even the pauper's pittance!

The conditions are hard, God knows, on the men and women of the mines; but it is upon the children that the burden falls heaviest. There is little hope for many of the elders, blunted as they are by a life of drudgery, hardened by years of imposition, dulled by acceptance of hardship and privation—miseries accepted by them as they accept the sleets of winter and the heats of summer. But who would believe that a land with memories behind it of Plymouth Rock and Penn's Oak could allow thousands of children to come into an inheritance of rayless ignorance beside which the old rigors and losses of the frontier seem a liberal education?

The laws of Pennsylvania forbid boys under sixteen in the coal-mines, and boys under fourteen in the breakers. But Pennsylvania has easy squints at the law. Her statutes ordain that a railroad shall not own coal-mines; and yet it is here that railroads do own and operate coal-mines. The laws are trying to prevent the cornering of trade and the plundering of the people. But perchance this is not the will and wish of heaven.

Who knows but the laws of Pennsylvania are obstructing the purposes of Providence? For God, according to George Baer, has intrusted to him and a few other "Christian gentlemen the property interests of the nation."

So, in spite of well-sounding restriction laws, there are thousands of boys in the breakers with lying certificates filed in the offices of the coal company. These lying documents, these easy indulgences, may be had from a complaisant notary—for a quarter. Each year, at the close of the spring school term, a grist of boys are sworn in as coming to working age on the fortuitous last day of the term—a remarkable conjunction of the zodiac with the needs of the "divinely appointed" coal-barons! Parents hardened by the sad carnality of the struggle for existence, or forced by the long battle for bread, stand ready to corroborate these false ages. Children echo the lie, and the honest inspector is powerless, and will be until the lever of public opinion and the hammer of social righteousness hurl down the reign of misrule builded on this inhumanity, this perjury, this shame.

Eighteen thousand persons, mostly boys, are known to be picking anthracite coal in the breakers. It is an open secret that the boys with their dinner-pails are filing toward the collieries instead of toward the schoolhouse. In small communities ninety-five per cent. of the boys are swallowed up by the breakers before they leave the primary grades. Up to ten years of age, the school-registers of large graded schools show about an equal number of boys and girls. From ten to fourteen there suddenly appear in the school-benches four girls to every boy. During every strike, when the mines are " dead ", the schools again flood with boys. Obviously those missing boys are in the breakers when the breakers are running.

In the coal-mines child labor is confined chiefly to the breakers. The coal, after being hoisted from the pit, is dumped into cyclopean cylinders, where it is crushed and run down long chutes into a heap for hauling. The slate and slag are picked out of the flying stream by boys of eight for the most part, but also by old men, most of whom began as breaker-boys before their teens, and who, after a lifetime of work below ground, are

back, penniless, at their old boyhood task. Cramped like Hindu idols, aged and blackened as the gargoyles of Notre Dame, rows and rows of these humped-up boys and broken-down old men sit beside the cataracts of coal, watching and snatching at the slate sweeping by in the black stream. If, as in many cases, the coal is cleaned dry, a dust from the ever rushing, bumping river rises in a black fog that envelopes the pickers, clogging every air passage, gritting into the skin, burning into the eyes—a fog that hangs darkly above the breakers long after the day is done. The boys all wear the miner's lamp as a frontlet above the eyes. This makes a little flickering halo of light misting about each wizened face. But in spite of the lamps, a twilight of flying dust hovers over the breakers.

In this dim Bastile of labor, young boys are wasting away their youth; are spilling the precious energy of the critical period of their lives. They are wasting in this brute grind the sacred strength that should go to make them men. Boys about whose minds a piteous, never-to-be-destroyed wall of ignorance is growing, boys who are the heirs of all the

ages, are immured in these coal-breakers nine and ten hours at a stretch, scullioning for the nation, all their future menaced, all their manhood murdered. And what is the recompense? A few miserable dimes a day.

The boys of a kinder fortune find it irksome to sit even one hour in a schoolroom with seats carefully shaped to the curves of the body; but these breaker boys must sit long hours on a rough cross-beam, straddling the stream of coal, their feet planted in the chutes to guide the flow of the coal; must sit staring, bending, reaching, flinging out the dross of the ceaseless avalanche; must sit with their backs hunched over, their fingers torn by the sharp impact of the scudding coal. And in the winter they have added miseries—their bodies are numbed by the zero cold of the breakers, their fingers are cramped and cut by the icy drift. All day their ears are afflicted with the ceaseless swishing and sledging and snorting of the machinery as it hoists and crushes and pushes the coal; all day their eyes are strained by the continual watch in the sooty twilight; all day their lungs are rasped and coated with the flying

coal-dust, making them ready for the ravages of asthma and miner's consumption. The monotony of the boy's day is broken only by a stop of a few minutes to fling his dinner down his throat. He champs in his grimy mouth the food taken from his grimy hands. This is his "refreshment." Then back again to the soot and smut that rank him with the forlorn chimney-sweeps of the old days. The monotony of the endlessly repeated process of the breakers is never broken except by accident. If fatal, then the other breaker-boys have a half-holiday to march behind their comrade to his small new grave on a quiet hill. Who can say that the living in these little processions are more fortunate than the dead?

If the hapless boy misses the little grave on the hill, there may come for him a short rest in the hospital. Then the unfingered hand, the empty sleeve, or the hobbling crutch will mark one more little soldier of fortune worsted by "the system," one young soldier a little harder hit than his fellows in our gruesome game of dollars.

In this mine work, as in all work, the dice are loaded against the child. The monoto-

nous repetends of our labor statistics reveal a startling fact. In coal-mining, as in all trades and traffics, three times as many children as elders, in proportion, are maimed or murdered during the round of the year. Let the immensity of this impeachment of "the system" seep into your minds. Hold the thought: three times as many mangled children as men! Kaffirs and Choctaws surpass us in humanity. For in times of danger they shield their young with their own bodies; while we fling ours out into perils three times greater than our own!

From the breakers a boy may be promoted to more responsible work under ground, as door-tender, switch-boy, mule-driver; or he may be appointed to the more perilous hand-to-hand work with the coal, as cutter, timberer, pumper, dumper, fire-boss, or pit-boss. The trap-boy is a door-tender, who sits alone all day in a black tunnel in the path of the rushing drafts, seeing only passing mules and scurrying rats. Often he wades in slush over his shoe-tops; his little life and energy all used up in the opening or shutting of the door for the passing mules, mules that never ascend to the open day, but grow blind at

last in the darkness of this man-made Tartarus.

But these are not the worst fates that overtake the boys of the coal mines. There are disasters more terrible than failing lungs or crushed bodies or mutilated limbs, more terrible even than death—*the atrophy of the mind, the destruction of the soul.* These boys are snatched from the schools to help out the scraping economies of the home. Ignorance settles on them like a black smoke. What is responsible for this? Is it not our selfish industrial system, which tends to keep wages down to the hunger-line—a system that makes it impossible for hundreds of thousands to live anything like a complete life, however hard they scrape and save, however hard they work and will?

But sadder than the mental loss is soul loss. Men have been virtuous without learning. They have possessed the wisdom of the heart without knowing the wisdom of the books. But they have had about them fit environment, noble companionship, noble ideals. These boys of the mines, however, are robbed of this companionship, are stripped of these ideals. While yet in the first sap of their

youth, they are flung out to the society of lewd and hardened men. What wonder that they learn to enjoy only the cheapest and coarsest pleasures? What wonder that the gambling-hole and the drinking-joint are their frequent havens? What wonder that they drift rapidly into the moral sinks and sewers? Day by day profanities and obscenities wash over them; day by day vices rot down the foundations of their manhood.

And yet, in this coal centre, no one seems to take to heart this waste of precious boyhood. Certain it is that no coal-baron leaves his yacht or his city mansion to look into this treason against life. These boys get less attention than the blind wheels and derricks of the breakers. No one cries protest. Even the churches are silent. The will of Capitalism is supreme.

Five hundred thousand souls breed and burrow in this coal region. Peer into their pitiful homes; bend under the load of labor pressing so heavily on parent and child; taste of their life run empty of the nobler joys of the mind. Do this, and say what manner of men we are shaping in this magnificent Appalachian region—here in this stupendous

theatre of a new drama of humanity—here, where, for the first time in history, the Anglo-Saxons are called upon to brother and blend with the men coming to us from the Seven Hills of Rome and that other host coming out of the Slavic mist.

VI

THE GRIND BEHIND THE HOLIDAYS

IN the year 1212 a wild call thrilled over Southern Europe—a call for the children of the world to gather into bands and march away to far-off Palestine. The word went over Christendom that only the children could conquer the Saracen and recover the Sepulcher; that only "the pure in heart" could recover the blessed tomb from the Paynim hordes. The little ones must join the Holy War! And for all who lived through the perilous adventure, there waited a place of honor in the hearts of men; and for all who died in battle, there waited the vacant places in heaven left of old by the fallen angels!

So from castle and hut, from hill and field, the children gathered into armies and marched away. Up the Rhine and over the Alps, down the Rhone and over the Pyrenees, they trailed and trooped, weary and wonder-

ing, halt and heavy-eyed, hurrying on, ever on, at the mystic call. Thirty thousand from France, under the boy Stephen; twenty thousand from Germany, under the boy Nicholas; fifty thousand strong, the Children's Crusade streamed toward the Holy Land. Hundreds perished of fatigue and homesickness on the stony roads; hundreds more went down at sea; hundreds more were sold into Mohammedan slavery. The agonies of those little ones have never been recorded; the waste of the hope and joy that went down with them has never been computed. Fifty thousand precious lives were poured out—a flood of bright waters lost in the desert sands.

Let any cause today, in whatever mistaken devotion, dare to call a host of little children to such an open field of death, and how soon the majesty of public opinion and the sovereignty of the law would smite the criers and hush the presumptuous pleading! Yet the mysterious and awful mandate of some power has gone out over our own land, summoning our little ones from shelter and play and study, summoning them to a destruction less swift, less picturesque, less heroic, but hardly less fatal, than that medieval destruc-

tion. Greed and Gain, grim guardians of the great god Mammon, continually cry in the ears of the poor, "Give us your little ones!" And forever do the poor push out their little ones at the imperious ukase, feeding the children to a blind Hunger that is never filled. The spell of material things is so heavy on the hearts of all of us that scarce a protest goes up against this betrayal of youth, this sacrifice of the children in factory, store, and shop. And, mockery of mockeries, it is at *Christmas* time that the evil reaches its malign height.

"Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for such is the kingdom of God." So spake the Friend of Children, He who cried out terrible words against those "who devour widows' houses," and those "who walk over graves." "Suffer little children to come unto Me!" A trustful man from Mars, recalling this sweet old mandate, might think, as he wandered about our streets, that we are a very loving and mindful people. For, on many of the portals of our big business houses, he would see the fatherly assurances: "Small boys wanted," "Small girls wanted." This might seem to him like a

faithful following of the old invitation of Jesus: He would not know that there are two voices calling to our children—Christ's and Mammon's.

"Small" children are wanted, you will notice, not "young" children; for the inconvenient law declares, in some quarters, that young children shall not be drawn into these devouring doors. "Small" children are called for; and who can deny the factory pasha's right to fix the stature of his workers? Can it be possible that "small" children mean small wages and large profits? And at Christmas time—"the children's time," as we call it in our soft rhetoric—the march of this army of little workers is heaviest; it is then that the feet falter most wearily. You cannot, in any city, at any season, go upon the street too early nor too late to miss the tired recruits of this children's army. Between seven and eight in the morning, and between six and seven in the evening, they sprinkle the ways of traffic, flying to and from their work. But at Christmas time this army of little conscripts suddenly increases. On the streets; in halls, and elevators; in offices, stores, and cellars; in

workshops and factories—in almost every industry we have built for luxury or utility, thousands of little feet and hands and brains are there to serve and suffer.

The New York Factory Investigating Commission, which reported in 1913, records the sickening fact that many stores were found that worked their employes as high as fifteen hours a day during the Christmas rush. Mark these excerpts from the report, bearing specifically upon the nature of store work during the season of peace and good will:

"Oftentimes the management augments the selling force of the store by half its regular staff and only increases the number of packers and cashiers where it is judged absolutely necessary. In this way the goods are sold quickly, although customers are puzzled and irritated at the way in which they are kept waiting for their change fifteen or twenty minutes. In one large store two young girls (one 15 years and one 17 years old) served fourteen salesgirls, who in turn were waiting on several hundreds of customers. These children worked at breakneck speed; they were in their places up till the last minute before closing time; and since no

special seats were provided for them they were obliged to stand all day long. The younger girl, Anna, aged 15 years, was almost crying of weariness. Not only did she complain that her ' legs ached awful,' but that her hands smarted ' from doing up so many boxes and tying so much string.' ' They think they've got a horse here,' she said to the investigator."

Almost without exception the girls complain of the extreme discomfort and fatigue that come from continuous standing. Swollen and aching feet and broken arches result. When the night's rest is cut down for six nights or more without a break there is no opportunity to recover from the day's exhaustion. One inside investigator described a condition which was doubtlessly repeated in many other stores at this time of the year:

" In the toy department six girls out of twelve at the counter were forced to take a day off during the week, December 16th to 21st, on account of extreme fatigue. Four others were so tired and sick that they complained constantly, and declared they would have to be absent some day before Christmas in order to stand the strain of the

work. The girls, of course, lose pay when they are absent, but every one of them said they 'just couldn't stand it' without taking the day off, although none of them could afford this rest. Moreover, when girls are absent, the burden of their work falls on the remaining salesgirls. Thus with three girls away one day there was such a constant rush that one girl said, 'I didn't have a chance to sit down from 9:15 till 6:45, except at lunch, and I didn't see any other girl at the counter sitting down either.'"

Finally when the rush is over, Christmas day is sometimes spent in bed, and for weeks thereafter the injury to health is still felt. One witness called before the Commission was asked:

"How do you feel after those weeks' overtime?"

"Well, I was home three months."

"As a result?"

Another witness: "Yes, this girl has just broken down; she couldn't stand it."

Yet the case of New York is not peculiar but *typical.* In every city in the land there is this same devouring reach for little children during the Christmas season—the same

greedy yielding on the part of employers to the delay, thoughtlessness and indifference that mark the average Christmas "shopper."

It is, however, in the box, the confectionery, and a few other factories that the masses of the children throng. It is in these that the hours are longest, the drive hardest, and the pay scantiest. Not even the bundle wrappers and packers, the cash girls and the delivery boys in the large retail stores have so hard a fate.

A thing so dainty and delicate as confectionery, we are slow to associate with drudgery and weariness. The lucent glistening piles of the Christmas shops, little delectable mountains flavored with every hiving from Attica to San Diego, and tinted and scented with the cheerful May time—all this ambrosial stuff might seem to have come, like flower and fruit and comb, out of the ever-springing joy of nature. Yet this trade, which employs more people than milling, canning, or meat-packing, is one of the industries in which little children are found to be most efficient and desirable. The candy factory of the cheaper grade is a place swarming with little ones, especially girls. It

is a place where children are worked cruelly long hours to fill orders; where the work is murderously monotonous; where health and character are broken down.

Three months before Christmas the smaller confectionery establishments call in troops of little children and begin full work and overtime work, making ready for this brave pomp of the holidays. There must be preparation for the bulging paper sack and the swollen tarlatan bag of the Christmas tree, for the bottle of striated sticks, and the pudgy "sucker" with its noble lasting quality. Tons upon tons of candy must be prepared for the holiday markets. What irony of civilization is this—*one band of children wasting their bodies and souls to make a little joy for the rest?* What sardonic mind conceived this caricature of justice, this burlesque of life?

"Dipping" chocolates, that is, plunging bits of candy into a vat of boiling chocolate, a fraction of an ounce at a time, but totaling one hundred pounds in a day, at a half-cent a pound—this is one of the tasks of candy-making that a small girl can do. For a while it is fun to dip the tidbit, and fish it out, and

set it away neatly coated; quite as fine a game as making mud pies. And the girl may eat as many pieces as she pleases, till comes that sudden and horrid day when she renounces chocolates forever. But the pretty game palls after ten hours of bending in the same position, ten hours of using the same set of muscles in the one little arc of motion from the vat to the shelf. The odor, too, grows nauseating.

Worst of all, in the cheaper shops with the utensils unprotected by asbestos, the poor little legs under the table, hugged up to the big hot pot sunken beneath the surface, begin to get burned. "Quick, quick, sister," a visitor at the home of one of these candy-workers heard one of the little homecomers cry. "Quick, sister; it is awful tonight." And her big sister, without further intimation, ran for the vaseline bottle, and there on the little legs were the ever renewed scars and blisters of her cruel trade.

Another hardship that falls on the girls handling caramels is the continuous passing with the trays from the cooking to the refrigerating rooms, the sudden transition from a ninety-degree atmosphere to one of only

twenty. Physicians who tend these stooped, hollow-chested children find in this sudden changing of temperatures a fruitful cause of the lung and bronchial troubles that pursue these fated workers.

In five large candy factories in New York City the regular day's work is from seven-thirty to seven-thirty, with a half-hour for luncheon. But in the " rush " season the time goes on till nine or ten in the evening. For overtime the little ones get from five to seven cents an hour. The work done by the children, if done in a fair temperature and for a brief time, would not be any harder than " pom, pom, pull away " or " King George's army." But when the lifting aggregates hundreds of pounds in a day, when the steps multiply into miles and leagues, when time is stolen not only from play, but also from rest and sleep, the problem grows appalling.

The ventilation in some of these cheaper places is abominable. The odors of the different candy flavors and the smells of burnt sugar all mix into a nauseating blend. " Sometimes," says Gussie, a candymaker who abominates candy, " sometimes the smells are awful. Maple sugar is one. Oh,

barrels of maple sugar in a hot room all day long—it is the limit! Our heads ache and ache. Lots of girls faint with the heat and the smells."

The candy-making of the factories is pieced out with home work in the tenements—a work that saves the manufacturers rent and storage and overseers. Hundreds of pounds of candy are given out to the parents and children of the tenements, to be taken home, and wrapped bit by bit in paper, or boxed for the stores. Picking nuts from the shells is a chore that can be done by anyone. A child is seldom too sick to work at this. The cough of tuberculosis interrupts only for a moment, and convalescents from diphtheria or scarlet fever are soon able to take the meats from the broken shells.

When machinery annexed box-making to its long list of industries, it made possible the manifold and swift manufacture of boxes, and drew the helpless children into the trade. The Christmas demand greatly increases the call for boxes for packing, for perfumery, for candy, and for a hundred other uses, frivolous or important. The cheap factories producing these boxes begin in the fall to

run full time and overtime, in preparation for the holiday rush. Schools in working districts are thinned out at this season in the hurried hegira to the box factories. The inspectors, always too few, are simply overwhelmed by the inrush to the holiday work. No child under fourteen is allowed by law to labor in factory or shop in New York State. But many parents, pressed by poverty or cupidity, are eager to mint their little children into a little miserable money. To do this they must have a certificate; and they seldom halt at the easy oath that brings the "work paper." A child sometimes uses the certificate of an older sister or a friend; or a "wise" mother borrows a neighbor's larger child to impersonate her own before the notary, who frequently is interested only in "raking in" his little fee. The overseer of the factory never questions the certificate; the words of the paper protect him.

The 1914 report of the New York State Factory Investigating Commission reports that girl confectionery workers receive an average of $5 a week, and that in the paper-box industry *one-half* of the girl workers *under eighteen* earn less than $5 a week.

Think, then, what must be the pittance of the little ones sneaked into these factories at the Christmas time!

There are also housing evils to consider, for as the box-making machinery is comparatively light, any old ramshackle building will do for a factory. A structure full of workers fell apart on the Bowery one day and crippled three little girls. One dingy old building that comes to mind would give scant hope of safety in case of panic. It is a concern devoted exclusively to the manufacture of that most important receptacle, the cigarette box. The narrow, dark stairs are gaumy with paste, and everywhere open barrels of the mixture gave out the sickening, sour odor that is always in the nostrils of the workers. The front windows were full of broken panes, panes unmended for years. These openings made no difference in summer; but in winter, as there is but one good stove to a floor, even the "good" girls may be forgiven for complaining of the chill and for asking for some way to keep the paste from freezing on their fingers.

Four floors of the factory were used as workrooms. Many work-benches were

empty. But work is slack in summer; besides, there was a period of delay occasioned by the suave proprietor, while he inquired the visitor's name, station, and intentions. The interval of detention was long enough for the warning of a bell and the scurrying of a bevy of under-age girls to hide on roofs or in empty cases. Such a scramble frequently occurs at the coming of inspectors. The back windows have been found a safe escape for boys. There were a few sallow, haggard men in the factory; but the workers were chiefly girls, each larger one having a small satellite as a helper. One hyena of a machine, with a shut of the jaws bites out the parts of many boxes. Another sets up the box—a machine with a cruel scissoring "feed" which loves to suck in and crush and tear unwary fingers. After the setting up, an automatic winder unrolls paper to cover the box, and a girl gives the human touch that directs its tireless energy. A smaller girl, who is her assistant, turns in the edges—a work that the machine is not quite deft enough to do, in this business where "the machines are almost human, and the human beings are almost machines."

It was hot outside. Happier children released from school, were off to the mountains or the seaside. But these work children were as busy as the wheels about them. The sweat poured off their faces, but they went on creasing, shaping, gluing, and covering boxes; covering them with brilliant yellow and scarlet and emerald, which recalled the far fields of wild grasses, red lilies, and black-eyed Susans, where the happier children were romping and shouting to the sky. But the boxmakers, cooped up and silent, bent to their work, shaping and sticking and smoothing at the signal of the machine, while the growing piles of gaudy boxes loomed like the mounds of the Toltecs.

It was not long before the workers were eating their luncheons. But as they make boxes by the piece, they cannot stop their work for a little incident like eating. And as there are no lavatories nor towels, they cannot waste time washing hands. What was their "refreshing" midsummer luncheon? Each one was nibbling the end of a loaf of stale bread, that was all; no butter, no cheese, no meat, no fruit. A spindling, spooky little girl of about ten was gliding through the

room with a basket full of loaves cut in two, supplying to each young worker this delectable and stimulating morsel.

In the East Side box factories in the Christmas season the children claiming to be sixteen, begin their work at seven-thirty and keep it up till nine at night. From seven-thirty to nine at night! Reader, do you take into your heart how long these hours are for young fingers and young feet? But how are these tired workers kept at the wheels? *The factory doors are locked!* Who does not remember the Triangle, that waist-factory fire, in which 147 locked-in girls were burned to death?

American children forced by necessity to work—this is enough to shame the nation. But now we find them locked in to their dreary tasks! No wonder that the factory master is looking for "small girls." Little girls are "good": they ask for nothing, they object to nothing. They are timid; so they do not cry out against hard conditions, nor resent the flood of vulgarity washing over their souls. They do not complain when their fingers are caught and crushed in the machines. They know "you ought to keep

wide awake and not take your eyes off your work." And these "good" little girls are quick to go to the hospital with their bleeding fingers, anxious not to offend the overseer with bloodstains on the boxes. There must be no visible bloodstains on the work, although it is sprinkled red to those who look from above. These "good" little girls are the profit-monger's ideal; they are "content with the station in life to which God has called them."

Some of those fancy white boxes, my lady, in which you sent out slices of your wedding cake to carry good dreams—those white boxes came, perhaps, from this very factory, with its locked-up, hungry children. That lovely, heart-shaped box, wreathed with holly, and marked, "All Christmas joys be thine!" came, perchance, from just such tired fingers. Your glove box, madam, and your handkerchief box, strewn with "pansies for thoughts," or "roses for the flush of youth," were shaped for you no doubt by little wizened girls with aching backs and heavy eyes.

One face follows me still, the gaunt face of a boy crouched like a caryatid, pasting tiny labels on the margins of cigarette-boxes. All

day long he stuck little oblongs of paper marked with the runic words: "Cork tips," "Cork tips," "Cork tips." That was his one message to the universe. His pay was twenty-five cents a thousand; and he sat there, growing bent and haggard, and spending all his energies to promulgate to humanity this news about cork tips. Other boys of his age were away climbing mountains, swimming rivers, and reading Walter Scott. But this deadly drudgery, this death-in-life, is what a "high stage of civilization" provides for *him*. If perchance he should rebel, this is the fate provided for the *next* child waiting in the long line of little lads pushed into these prisons by poverty.

Factory children do not always have the patience of the stone in the walls. Even "good" little girls will sometimes resist. There was once a Christmas in New York when 200 box-factory girls struck, because the master, at the height of the season, declared a wage cut of ten per cent. Thirty-five cents a week would mean only a box of candy to some children; but to these children it meant more pinching on food and clothes, and less medicine for the babies at home. The

little strikers appealed to other children not to go to work at the cut-down wages. This appeal the master resented as an interference with his "rights." The strikers stationed watchers on the street. He got the police to interfere, and had fifty-seven small girls arrested. Some were fined, some reprimanded. He called in the power of the nation, and that power hastened to his help. The children were downed!

So the end of it all was that the little ones, hungry and cold in midwinter, lost the strike; and the ten per cent. cut is still on; and they are still creasing and shearing and pasting—and eating dry bread.

The narrow stairs of the usual box factory, half dark at midday, are dark indeed after night when the workers descend! What dangers may lurk in these unlighted places when unprotected girls and coarse men are crowded together on the way out! And there are the later dangers of the streets for some of these untaught, unshielded girls, girls deprived of exercise in the open air, their minds dulled in a weary round of automatic work, their souls exposed to brutal jests and vile profanties. What is the cure for this shame,

this misery? It is certain that no rose-water remedy can make safe these evil ways.

It would be more pleasing to my pen, at this season and at all seasons, to write smooth words and to say soft things. This sort of writing might gratify our national vanity, but it would not enlighten our national conscience. So I have chosen to speak "not the pleasant, but the true."

"Merry Christmas!" to you, little workers —you, little boy; you, little girl! "Merry Christmas!" to you, little moles, down in the black murk of our civilization! Strength to you in your frail struggle with the Grim Powers. And "Merry Christmas!" also to you, fortunate children—you, little boy, with your sled and skates; you, little girl, with your doll and dominoes! Let no shadow fall on your hearts. You are yet too young to know the grief of life. You need not know of the cramped little fingers that make toys and joys for you. You need not know that your Christmas delight comes out of thousands of little sorrows. But you will know this by-and-by; and then you will rise in holy anger and sweep away the system that makes these inhumanities possible.

VII

THE SMOKE OF SACRIFICE

DIGGING down into the buried cave-dwelling of our prehistoric ancestors, we sometimes come upon strange evidences of old, far-off, unhappy things—unchronicled, unremembered tragedies of forgotten ages. In one cave a nameless little band on some dateless day were pursued to their death; and their pathetic story is mutely recorded by a few heaps of crumbling bones and blunted spears. The bones of these ancient men are lying besides their spears in a half-circle, just within the entrance; while the bones of the women and children are heaped against the rocky walls at the back of the cave. These fierce, skin-clad men died protecting their women and their young; they perished at the cave's mouth with the women and children shielded from the enemy.

The labor barons of today are not so tender and heroic as were these hairy, unchurched savages who left their little epic in

bone and flint. Ernest Crosby, that great bard militant, spoke for certain of our "captains of industry." He made them say:

"So we draw up the armies of trade,
And invade,
With the children in front to fall first, as is meet—
Children of mill and of sweat-shop and mine.
And behind them the women stand,
Jaded and wan, in line;
Then comes the hosts of the diggers and builders, artisans, craftsmen, and all.
It is fine.
It is grand!
Let them fall:
We are safe in the rear with the loot in our hand."

We have already glanced at the child at work in cotton-mill and coal-mine and glass factory and sweat-shop and box and candy factories. Thousands of children are working also in the fields and storerooms and manufactories of our vast tobacco industry. This is no new product of our soil. The weird tobacco plant, with its strange potency,

was used immemorially in the tribal rites and ceremonials of the Red race. To them it was a sacred leaf sending up a hallowed vapor. Sir Walter Raleigh carried the weed to England where, to the astonished court, he seemed a man on fire. Its entrance into civilization was fought by pope and king and sultan. Users of tobacco were excommunicated, exiled, executed. But neither papal bull, nor gallows tree, nor scimiter stroke could stay the progress of the wizard weed.

The demand for tobacco, our first great field crop, caused negro slavery to take form in our land. The industry has grown with our national growth, till now we have an enormous army engaged in planting, harvesting, stripping, blending, shaping, packing, labeling, shipping, and selling this gigantic harvest of leaves. We are making countless cigars and cigarettes. It was a little over a hundred years ago that a merry wife at Windsor, in old Connecticut, made the first cigar. Now the United States consumes nearly nine billion cigars a year, and sixty million dollars a year are spent for this fleeting pleasure.

Is tobacco so necessary to human welfare that we should sacrifice childhood for it? Men traveled long centuries without its help. Without it the Rameses conceived of eternity, and Job arraigned and justified God. Without it Plato explored the mystery of life, and Caesar won the throne of the world. Nevertheless, this determined weed has now pushed itself into a place beside the cottonplant and the cornstalk.

In 1901 the American tobacco trust opened an office and advertised for girls to make "cheroots." A big crowd of men and boys came clamoring about the place, asking for the work, and making such an uproar that the police were forced to club them away. Young girls got the work, accepting two dollars and fifty cents a week, less sixty cents for carfare. In this way children are crowding out their elders and lowering wages. Twelve thousand children are admitted by the census to be slaving in our tobacco industry; and the introduction of machinery in the factories is continually inviting more and more children to displace their elders. From 1880 to 1900 the population of the United States increased fifty per cent.; but the num-

ber of boys at work between ten and fifteen years of age increased one hundred per cent., while the number of girl workers increased one hundred and fifty per cent. During this time the number of children in the tobacco industry nearly doubled. Child labor means cheaper labor. "Increased production and decreased expense" is the watchword of our fierce industrial competition.

Many children, both white and colored, work on the tobacco plantations of the South, weeding and "worming" and hoeing, driven on not infrequently by the oaths of heartless overseers. In North Carolina, one-fourth of the tobacco workers are children. In one factory there are four hundred colored children. Some are over ten years of age, but many children of six and seven are working beside their mothers. A child of only three years can straighten out leaves for wrappers, and a little worker of four is good help at stripping. A ten-year-old is often an expert "roller." The welfare workers of Kentucky blame the tobacco fields for the ghastly illiteracy of the children of the State.

As tobacco manufacturing is one of the poorly paid trades, there go with it, especially

in non-unionized sections, all the evils that follow in the train of the sweated trades. He who runs may read this litany of evils. It is written large and black against civilization—crowded houses, vile sanitation, inadequate food, insufficient clothing, destroyed health, broken-down bodies. Add to these evils the losses of the spirit—loss of education, loss of innocence, loss of nerve force. The child, pushed out too early into wage-earning, nearly always grows rebellious to authority; while the too early strain on his body drives him into sundry dissipations after working hours.

In New York an awakened public sentiment long ago commanded the closing up of the miserable tenement tobacco factories; and union labor (let it be said to the everlasting honor of unionism) has banished child labor from all the tobacco factories of New York City. In Philadelphia a certain tobacco factory was long known as "the kindergarten" on account of the extreme youth of its child workers. The push of public sentiment has since transferred these children to the schoolhouse. But in many another factory, North and South and West, children with aching

muscles, stained fingers, and inflamed eyes are still bent at the tobacco benches. And they will be held there till the public conscience sets them free.

In Pittsburg, the city that has spawned fortunes and gendered millionaires, joyless tobacco work goes on under revolting conditions. In the "hill" district the tenement manufacture prevails as it prevailed in our New York tenements, when the loud scandal of it called out the historic Tenement House Commission of the '80s and '90s.

Many of the recitals before that commission stick in the memory as unique records of squalor. Similar conditions are now existing in other places where home factories still manipulate the weed. A typical tenement home consists of two or three rooms, where toil the husband, wife and children, with perhaps a group of called-in relations and working lodgers. Only one room—the workroom—has outside light. The bedroom has only a hole opening into the dusty and musty hall. Often the plumbing is old and primitive, and the conditions are not infrequently offensive to eyes and nostrils and a constant menace to health. The loose tobacco lies underfoot or

on the beds or chairs or tables where the children play or lie sick. Heaps of stems and scraps of tobacco have been known to lie on the floors until they rotted, and crawled with vermin.

Wherever the father is working with his family, the combined household are able to make only as much as the father alone could if he had the good fortune to find work in a factory.

Those conditions exist in Pittsburg and other cities, where tobacco making and home making go on in the same barracks. Both mothers and fathers are exhausted by the pressure of their interminable piece-work. Often the cigar rollers sleep while the others "stem" and "bunch," thus keeping the work going day and night. In such places children must work before and after school if the ruthless inspector and health officer insist upon enforcing the despised compulsory education law. Inspectors say that large numbers of cigars are made in the midnight hours, in order to use these little fingers. Children often fall asleep, or even faint, at the cigar bench. Those working for the American tobacco trust are said to fall ex-

hausted sometimes at the end of a day's work. The atmosphere must be kept warm and damp for the sake of the tobacco, and this hothouse air seriously debilitates the human organism.

In basements, dark and damp and filthy—where the human occupants dispute ownership with cockroach and rat, blank-faced children strip tobacco leaves, straining their eyes at their endless task. Visitors can barely see the dull brown of the tobacco in the dim light; and the camera refuses to recognize the group inside.

These workers get eight to ten cents a hundred for the making. This is a drudgery that drains dry the life of the drudges. Wild wraiths, the faces and forms of women and children dead and dying, should appear to us in the whirling smoke blown from these cigars. Who knows but that the hosts of the vanished over-burdened workers haunt their work?

Many children, after school is out, are forced to work till bedtime, which does not come till they fall asleep at the work-bench. Other little toilers put in a whole day of fourteen to sixteen hours in the workshop. A

foreman of one such shop says it takes nearly the whole time of one man to keep the dozing little ones awake.

An investigator in Baltimore reports a Russian boy, one of many, working after school every night till nine o'clock, and all day Saturday and Sunday. No wonder small Ivan seems dull and morose at school. Perhaps he is thinking that back in the hardships of Russia he would not be worse off than he is in free America.

In one of the Pittsburg "hill" factories, a porky foreman pointed with pride to one of his most useful child slaves. "There is a girl," he chortled, twitching his thumb toward a little thing "sped up" to a high nervous tension, her hands flying swiftly over the wads on the bench—"there is a girl who can roll a thousand stogies a day—fifteen hundred sometimes!" "Yes," replied a visitor, "but at home she has grown too nervous to sit still or eat or even to sleep. And fifteen hundred times each day she bites off the end of a cigar!"

This little wreck of humanity, however, is the pride of Mammon. Perhaps she will have only brain fever or St. Vitus' dance, and

so live on to bring into life a brood of degenerates. Or she may die early of premature senility, like the tailor of thirty in Chicago, who had worked in a sweat-shop since he was six years old. Or she may go suddenly insane, as do many cruelly over-strained children. The weight always presses hardest on the most skillful and the most willing. But let us be calm, very calm; for before this patient little Pittsburg girl is a total wreck, she will have enriched the world with several cords of delectable "stogies." Her life will not have been in vain!

It is not hard work to strip tobacco, to tear the tough midrib from the limb leaves—no harder than making daisy chains or linking pine needles. Nor is it hard to bunch tobacco in longitudinal rolls that bulge a little in the middle and taper prettily toward the ends; nor hard to roll the pressed cylinders in the warm-tinted, silky wrapping leaves, tapering the ends to geometric points. But the simplest labor grows distressing and is devitalizing when done hour after hour, with no rest, no interest, no hope ahead.

It appears that our Cuban neighbors are more saving of their lives. To the Cuban

taberqueros there comes every day some clear-voiced, intelligent reader, to entertain them with the best poetry and stories. If this were a custom in American factories, the mind could be kept more alive and the body more alert. But now our tobacco work is too often a dead monotony, a nervous hurry.

Working in tobacco is not like working in corn or cabbage leaves. Tobacco is not a neutral factor that one takes no account of in manipulating. It has an aggressiveness of its own. It is what might be called a plant of tremendous personality, a Genghis Khan of the vegetable world that dominates all things in its neighborhood. The damp, rank odor of the tobacco factory frequently overcomes visitors, inducing dizziness and nausea.

If casual visitors, attuned to out-of-doors, are affected for hours by a brief stay in a factory not ashamed to be inspected, is it any wonder that seventy-five per cent. of the girls and women beginning work in the tobacco factories are said to fall ill in the first six months? One can well believe that the essence of this insistent weed finally saturates the tissues of the worker's body, and permeates all his secretions. It is distinctly

sensed in the milk of nursing mothers who work in the factory, if, happily, their babes are born alive. Remarkably often their newborn babes are dead, as medical annals affirm.

Tobacco manufacture is listed as a "dangerous trade," yet we give our children to its perils. Vertigo, dyspepsia, insomnia, palpitation, lassitude, feverishness — these are among the derangements of the body that go with the trade. By the side of the skulking diseases that lurk about the workers, marches another with conquering stride—the hideous White Plague.

The International Tobacco Union is one of the oldest organizations of labor. Owing to the coming in of the eight-hour day, won by the union in 1883, tuberculosis decreased in twenty years to one-half of its early mortality. Shorter hours, by some law of balance, always means more wages, more alert workmen, more cheerful homes, better food, greater resistance to disease. If so marked a good can be achieved by a few hours of liberation for grown men, how much more may be achieved by righting the conditions for growing children chained to hard labor and long hours!

VIII

SPINNERS IN THE DARK

AN old chronicle tells us that China once entered upon an age of invention; that pulley and lever and wheel were beginning their triumph in far Cathay. We can well believe that the nation that gave us the types that hold and spread our thought, the compass that stays and steers our steps, and the powder that guards our gates, had in its brain the cunning to unfold many another secret process that would help to give men empire over time and space and matter. But the astute emperor saw only disaster in labor-saving machinery. He felt that the machine made by man would rise like some living thing to throttle and overthrow man; that it would fling the worker out of his work and impoverish the many for the enriching of the few; and for these reasons he stretched forth a protesting hand and sternly decreed, "Let there be no more machines!"

Thus it came to pass that in mysterious

China invention was rooted out. And perhaps this hoary, careful nation to which Confucius gave the Silver Rule before Christ came with the Golden Rule, has been in a way wiser than our bolder nations of the West. "It is doubtful," said John Stuart Mill, "whether machinery has lightened the burden of a single human being." But it has done one thing never done before—it has drawn a host of little children into the grim slavery of the profit-hunters. Remembering this fact, there are dark moments when we can see no fatherly providence in the modern use of lever and wheel and screw and pulley that lift and tug and run for us. There are darker moments when we ask whether they were not the dream of Demogorgon, the enemy of man—contrivances "built in the eclipse" for man's undoing.

The machine has betrayed the worker and his children. When invention began to seize on industry the machine came to the front in England, and drew the home weaver and his family from country and village into the cities where the factories were beginning to take the old cheerful places of the hand-looms at the fireside. Then it was that there

should have gone up a sadder wail than the old heart-breaking plaint for the loss of wood-nymph and water-god, the old sad lamentation, "Pan is dead," for the whistle of the factory was the shrill knell of the childhood of thousands of our race.

A foolish delight was in the hearts of that century over this inhuman shifting of labor from father to child, from man to boy. Children not long from the cradles were put to work in the mills. "Scarce a thing of five years in the land but can now earn its own living!" cried Defoe exultantly, as if proclaiming the recovery of the lost elixir of life. Puny little paupers from the almshouses now become a source of revenue of the profit-mongers. Apsden told of carrying a seven-year-old boy on his shoulders across the snow to the factory for a day of sixteen hours, and told also of kneeling at the child's side to feed the little worker, who was not allowed to leave the machine.

England has fought a long fight to redeem her little ones from the worst of these horrors, but the children's children of those terrible years bear the marks of that dread bondage. Descendants of those early English weavers

are defective in body and dull in mind. Three times during the Boer War the military authorities of England had to lower their standards to be able to draw recruits from these degenerate Manchester spinners. And in the days that are coming, when our prophecy shall have become history, mankind may receive from our own land another lesson written in the same terrible terms, may see another testimony to the terrible truth that drudgery yoked with misery always begets a degraded and degrading humanity. Unless we take early warning our textile mills, our glassworks, our coal-breakers, our box factories, our canneries, our sweat-shops will stand as the abominable molds of a class of American degenerates akin to the imbecile Millet hoe-men of France.

One of the earliest needs of man was to find a cover for his nakedness, a defense against the winds and frosts that came out of the seas and the hills and the skies. When he could not secure a wolf's skin to cover his own, he wove a garment from flax or wool. Fragments of woven stuffs have come down to us in the crumbling mummy cases of the ancient pyramids. Purple linen, dyed with

the murex, was worn by the Phoenicians of old time. Herodotus told of fabrics woven by the looms of Babylon. We have a flaxen stuff descended to us from the lake dwellers of the stone age, from a time that was before history. Six thousand years men have been spinning. A hundred years ago steam came to their help, when suddenly the children were called in to slave in the busy mills.

It was at the spinning frames that Manchester began to heap her indignities upon the children. It is at the spinning frames that some of the worst atrocities of child labor are in operation in our own land. In the cotton factories, the "mill mites," or mill children, are at their spinning, sometimes by day, sometimes by night, the lint of cotton always in their lungs and the thunder of the machinery always in their ears. They are stunted or maimed or hurried out of life by the hundreds. This weaving of cotton cloth may be called "a necessity," but the weaving of silk is not a necessity. Men have been brave in buckskin, women happy in homespun. Men loved and laughed for ages before the proud hour when they first learned to

spin the entrails of worms into silken coverings.

In spite of all this, we have over eight thousand children working in our silk mills. In her output of silk America vies with Europe and Orient. But let this be no boast; for across the lustrious fabrics piled in bright bolts on shelf and counter, or hung in shimmering, flower-hued garments in our show windows, stretches the gaunt shadow of the little child.

In the hard-coal regions of Pennsylvania, following the anthracite mines, wherever the coal-breaker rises against the sky to suck in the boys of school and sunshine, there also the silk mill rises to draw in the girls from play and school. Because of the greed of the dividend-seekers, because of the indigence or indifference of parents, because of the ignorance and innocence of the children concerning the great gift of youth, because of the forgetfulness of the public that permits this waste of the most precious stuff of existence—for all these reasons the children, daily and nightly, are sold to the Setebos of the silk mill.

Small girls and boys, working in day- and

night-shifts, always on their feet, with every nerve and muscle strained, are paid at the average rate of three cents an hour. Three cents an hour for the surrender of sleep and strength, play and study, at the very time of life when they most need every budding force to make them fit vessels of honor to carry on the gift of life to generations to come.

Have you ever thought what it means to be a boy or a girl in a mill? Read these vivid words by John Trotwood Moore:

"Bull Run and Seven Days were doffers confined to the same set of frames. They followed their sisters, taking off the full bobbins and throwing them into a cart and thrusting empty bobbins into place. This requires an eye of lightning and a hand with the quickness of its stroke. For it must be done between the pulsings of the Big Thing's heart. A flash, a snap, a snarl of broken thread—up in the left hand flies the bobbin from its disentanglement of thread and skein, and down over the buzzing point of steel spindle settles the empty bobbin, thrust over the spindle by the right. It is all done with two quick movements—a flash and a jerk of

one hand up, and the other down, the eye riveted to the nicety of a hair's breadth, the stroke dowward gauged to the cup of a thimble, to settle over the point of the spindle's end: for the missing of a thread-breadth would send a spindle-blade through the hand, or tangle and snap a thread which was turning with a thousand revolutions in a minute.

"Snap—bang! Snap—bang! One hundred and twenty times, and back again, go the deft little workers, pushing their cart before them. Full at last, their cart is whirled away with flying heels to another machine.

"It was a steady, lightning, endless track. Their little trained fingers betook of their surroundings and worked like fingers of steel. Their legs seemed made of India rubber. Their eyes shot out right and left, left and right, looking for the broken threads on the whirling bobbins as hawks sweep over the marsh grass looking for mice."

A large part of the work in a silk mill is done in a warm, moist atmosphere, out of which the night workers must plunge into the rawness of the early morning. At the end of day we may see one flood of little

workers pouring out and another pouring in. And the ingoing children look as weary as the outgoing ones; all are worn, haggard and unrested. Sometimes the night children are held overtime to get in their ends, while little day workers wait outside, hugging the walls in the biting cold till there is place for them at the frames.

If we ask any one of these little creatures how old he (or she) is, none is small enough to be taken unawares. All are above thirteen. But their mathematics are sadly tangled when one questions them further.

"How old are you?" was asked of one of these spinners.

"Fourteen," she promptly answered.

"How long have you been working in the mills?"

"Three years and a half."

"How old were you when you began?"

"Thirteen."

Between the lines of this staccato dialogue one may see the easy mill-town custom of sliding the age scale to fit the words of the law.

Inside the mill there is the constant strain of young muscle matched against untiring

machinery. The children at the frames must stand all night, always alert, always watchful of broken threads, nimble to let no loose end be caught in with other threads. Nor must any loose curls or dangling braids adorn the heads of the little mill-folk. Braids and curls are for the picture-book children, or for the little misses who wear the silk, not for the little workers who spin the silk. Childish things must be put aside by our army of wage-earning children.

The Rev. Peter Roberts, for years a resident of the anthracite regions, states that he has seen little girls before the silk-frames, their short skirts tied close with string, so that they should not catch in the wheels and drag the child into the jaws of the machine. Frequently boys and girls have to stand on a stool to reach their work; although it is said that sometimes in the South frames are obligingly made of kindergarten size to accommodate the mill-mites.

A girl of eight in the cotton mills if she is right smart, can run a speeder, oiling and replenishing at the same time, creeping under the machinery to keep it clean. A long descent this, from Wordsworth's "little cot-

ton girl" of eight, hemming kerchiefs in a sunny dooryard!

A Philadelphia paper some few years ago contained the story of a little girl who worked for three dollars a week in a woolen mill in that city. The floors of woolen mills, are always slippery with wool grease. The child slipped, and thrusting out her arm she was caught in the cogs of an unguarded machine. Her right arm was broken in seven places from wrist to shoulder. No automobile was called, as would have been the case if little Edytha Vere de Vere had merely received a severe fall. Working girl Sarah walked nearly a mile to the nearest hospital. Her arm was so jaggedly chopped up that it didn't mend straight, and she is a cripple for life. But like the children blinded by splintering glass or the children struck by flying shuttles or the children mangled in rushing coal-chutes or the children unfingered in speeding box-factories—like all these, this girl, this little martyr of labor, goes to fill up that black page of statistics that records the fact that among wage earners, the boys under sixteen have twice as many accidents as the men; while the girls under sixteen

have three times as many accidents as the women.

Kellogg Durland, by a rare chance one night, was allowed to slip into one of the silk mills near Scranton, Pennsylvania, where the youth and beauty of little children are woven into the brightness of silky threads. Not everyone has the good fortune to slip into those weaving-rooms. They are well guarded from prying eyes. Many of the stockholders of the textile mills have never crossed the mill threshold, and sometimes they do not even know that children are slaving in their own works. They turn the business end over to the manager and only ask for the fatted dividends.

Mr. Durland reports one little girl, thin-featured, dull-eyed but always "at attention." The clik-clak of the rattling machines, the grind and mumble of the wheels shaking the whole structure, made conversation hard.

"How long have you worked here?" he asked the little creature.

"Two years."

"Do you always work nights?"

"Yes, all the time."

How many weary sighs of the little spin-

ners have gone into the taffetas that rustle at our pleasant firesides and down our pious church aisles! Are not some things bought at too high a price? Instead of bartering the youth and joy of our children for silken robes, it would be noble economy to let the silk art perish, fade into fable, lapse into legend with all the beautiful lost arts of buried Atlantis.

Outside the mill Mr. Durland again talked to the children. One little girl had a simple narrative that condemns everyone of us sitting in selfish ease. "When I first went to work at night," she said, "the long standing up hurt my feet, and my back pained all the time. Mother cried when I told her how I felt, and that made me feel so bad that I didn't tell her any more. My eyes hurt always from watching the threads at night. Sometimes I see threads everywhere. When I look at other things, I see threads, running across them. Sometimes the threads seem to be cutting into my eyes."

Another little thing, who had quit the work, spoke feelingly of the hardships: "The tangles were always worse when I was tired. I had to twist back the reel a long time till all

ABUSING THEIR EYES IN WATCHING THE RUSHING THREADS, SO THAT FREQUENTLY AT NOON THEY FALL ASLEEP WITH THE FOOD UNSWALLOWED

the tangles were gone. The big girl who had charge of our department used to scold me and the overseer said he would discharge me if I couldn't do better. Then my head would ache something awful."

Still another little girl said she was always "afraid, afraid"—to go down the long aisle between the snarling machines, "afraid" of the great dark outside. Those who remember their own childhood will take in the meaning of this piteous confession. The formless terrors of the night are giant gnomes to timid children. The fear of the machines and the unknown Power behind them is only the odd dread of witch and warlock.

Chances of being marred or maimed, of contracting tuberculosis and all the long train of diseases that send a girl into womanhood depleted and defeated—these are the burdens we add to the labor weight laid upon the little maidens who work in the silk mills. But worse than all these hurts of the flesh are the injuries imposed upon the soul. Incessant drudgery at day-work robs a girl of play and rest, and often makes her feverishly eager to rush into coarse evening pleasures, which too often are the only pleasures her

training seems to fit her to enjoy. But the girl who works nights is under still more dangerous influences. The moral evils that stalk in darkness dog her path.

As the child that works at night is never fully rested by his fitful day-sleep, the children in the silk mills begin to droop and drowse as the midnight hours creep on. Boys in the glassworks are given strong coffee to break up this wasteful lethargy; in the cotton mills the little things, worn out in the race with steel and steam, curl up on the floors to sleep through the midnight intermission. But some silk mills have hit upon a more enlivening expedient to rouse up the sluggards and squeeze more work out of the blinking end of the night. The dozing children are sent out into the open air for the half-hour recess at midnight. Frequently mills are on isolated sites surrounded by woods or open fields. Coarse men working in the mills may go out into the dark with these young girls. Loafers, eager for companions, may be waiting outside. In these outdoor periods one or two rough and older mill girls can sophisticate and contaminate a host of little innocent ones. Chances for un-

speakable evil are present. Need one suggest the terrors and the sorrows that may arise from these temptations springing upon unprotected girls and boys.

Pennsylvania is a rich and thrifty state, but many of its vast enterprises are pivoted on the lives of children. The manager of a large mill is quoted as saying: "Much of the prosperity of Pennyslvania is owing to the fact that she has a lower age-limit for work than any of her neighbors. Tinkering with existing conditions would only drive the mills into other states." A manager coming from Paterson, New Jersey, where child labor is under the ban, to a hospitable wide-open mining village in Pennsylvania, says chortlingly: "I save from sixty to seventy per cent. in wages by the move and I have twice as much labor as I need." And a manager in Allentown, Pennsylvania, where child labor is at a premium while idle men walk the streets looking for work, says complainingly: "All silk-throwing plants should leave Allentown: child labor is too scarce." The manager of a silk-throwing plant in South Bethlehem declares: "The coal-fields is the ideal place for a silk-throwing plant.

You get rent cheap, and coal cheap, and labor cheap, and parents don't object to having their children work nights."

Bad as day-work is for the child, night-work is far worse. But a mill baron explains saying: "By running two shifts, a day-shift and a night-shift, we get our capital for three per cent. interest. See?" Three per cent. seemed ample excuse for all the barbarism in his business. "Three per cent.!" Potent words! Carve them on the little headstone, baron!

"I deplore this business as much as you do," said a mill baron of the better sort. "But I am part of a great industrial system, and as long as that endures I must run my mills as others are run." There is a grim truth in this silk baron's apology. He is indeed a wheel in an iron system, a system that must be changed before the child can find permanent relief. Still, this is no sufficient excuse for his inhumanity, for he is under no compulsion to run a mill—not so long as he can earn his bread by breaking rock on the highway.

IX

THE BLIGHT ON THE EASTER LILIES

IN Bunyan's famous allegory, the Interpreter led Pilgrim into a room where he saw water pouring on a fire, and yet the fire was not put out. Then the Interpreter led him to the other side where someone was pouring oil that continually fed the flames; and then he understood.

For years the shame and sorrow of the tenements have smoldered or blazed in our great cities. We have tried by the outpouring of purse and preachment to drown the iniquity; yet continually it is fed by some vast social waste, by a vast system of industrial injustice which some day must be set right.

To get the full feel of the misery and mockery of life in the tenements one must look into the grim " homes " where young and old are goaded on by the demands of the holiday preparations. Christmas excepted,

our Easter festival lays more burden on many of our workers than is laid by any other in all the round of the year. That idyllic springtime festival, whether the scholar sees in it only the triumphant memory of the resurrection in the angel-hovered garden; or sees in it an apostolic perpetuation of the Jewish Passover with Christ presented as the paschal lamb; or sees in it a perpetuation of the Saxon fire-feast of Estera, goddess of morning and spring, with Christ represented as the bright sun of righteousness—whichever view is chosen, this immemorial vernal festival has always stood for joy at the wonder of renewed life, life re-arisen—of "life again, light again, love again." Alas! this larger, lovelier meaning has well-nigh faded out, for in this generation of the colossal factory and the multitudinous store and the teeming tenement house, Easter has come to be a season of unnecessary work and of overwork.

We ought to labor only in making things of use or beauty; yet hundreds of Easter workers spend long, hard hours making flimsy cards and tawdry books—shaping and painting glass eggs, paste chickens and plaster

rabbits; and thousands of us crowd into the stores to buy these unbeautiful, unmeaning trinkets, to be sent to persons supposed to expect them—a multitude of baubles made in weariness, selected with irk, carried with grievance, and received with regret.

To those who depend on the almanac and the fashion-plate for light and leading, Easter means only a time of changing styles, a date on which to display new spring gowns and bonnets—a sort of national millinery opening. But to the workers in the shadows, to the workers who display these bright adornings, it means only a blind rush and tug of work that makes this solemn festival a time of dread and weariness. They might truly say in tears, "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him."

It is not upon the clerks and carriers, however, that the heaviest weight of the Easter season presses. It is upon the makers of flowers and hats and garments. Especially heavy is the pressure on the child worker. The match-girl and the chimney-sweep are no longer types of childish oppression. They are obsolete in those old forms, but our sweat-shop children have more than filled their

places in every large city. In our tenement homes, where every finger must fly till the task is over—it is there, out of the reach of legal protection, that thousands of children are robbed of sleep and health, of play and school, to sew for city and nation. Even if a tenement child goes to school of its own will, or is forced there by the truant officer or by the "cruelty lady," he must none the less work before and after school to help in the season's rush.

In a previous chapter the "home finishing" of garments has been dealt with in its ghastly entirety. Let inquiry now be made into the countless other articles that are fashioned in the dark, foul rooms of the tenements for the adornment or gratification of those who strut and preen in a higher, happier world.

Ladies' collars, such as are piled high on the counters at Easter-time and make dainty finish for many an Easter gown, are a ceaseless product of the tenements. Women and girls slowly dying of tuberculosis, others just going down with fever or coming home from the hospital—such workers, young and old, can stitch at these light, airy things. At the

rate of ten and fifteen cents a dozen, it is sometimes possible for the diligent and expert to make forty cents a day if the eating and sleeping periods are reduced to a minimum.

Perhaps last Easter, you, my lady, wore one of those pretty things of lace and chiffon trimmed with shining beads and made at midnight by a starved-down sister. She could have made a few more collars had she had little children to spend their sight and strength sorting the beads for her. For children of kindergarten age are good for helping all day at sorting beads for collars and dainty slippers and belts and bags. Try doing this for two or three hours even, and see how "easy" it is! And think how you would like your child to do it all day for months and months.

New York demands a half-million neckties daily, and at holiday times the number swells. Designers and dyers in the silk mills make a special effort to produce new holiday effects. Twenty-seven new shades, running from birch-bark to mahogany, were one season's contribution to this one beauty-spot left of the vanished pomp of man's attire.

Hundreds of children are working on neckwear in the Eastern cities. Many necktie firms employ the workers in a hundred tenement homes at prices skinned down by the middlemen far below the factory's narrow margin. Little is left, for necktie-making is one of the poorest paid, closest shaved, and most fine-ridden of all the needle trades.

Surely it is better that the necktie (this last vestige of man's vanity) be flung to the waste-pile with his purpled hose, his frilled sleeves, and his beribboned periwig, if its folded or flowing lustres must cost little children so many hours of weary work. Let men inaugurate a cravatless age, let them fling by this last furbelow if by so doing they can break one fetter of the bonds laid on little children.

As usual with tenement work, home-finished neckties run every risk of carrying infection from the epidemics lurking or raging in these pest-haunted places. There are many recorded instances where even quarantine against contagious diseases has not stopped the smuggling in of raw material and the smuggling out of finished cravats.

One sad story, yet revolting, is that of the consumptive who spent three years coughing out his life over hundreds of stylish ties. Yes; dying hands sometimes linger over our cravats long before our own hands tie them.

In these "homes," any garment from a cotton wrapper to a lace evening robe may be manufactured. Embroidery for caps and blouses and cloaks is a sort of work that can use the eyes and fingers of children. Little hands can keep big cushions of needles threaded and ready for the machines. Each needle is a tiny glinting thing, an inch long, with a hole in the middle. Two thousand of these a day are sometimes threaded by a child under constant strain on the nerves. It does not seem to ease the aching eyes and trembling hands to know that the favorite designs for embroidery happen to be the anchor of hope and the eagle of our American liberty.

But with all this dark record there is no other Easter preparation where children are so cruelly overworked as in the making of artificial flowers. This craft is simpler than tie-making or collar-making. As in the old times babes of three were made to hold candles for English weavers; so in this age babes

of three are sometimes used to straighten out leaves for flower sprays. Children a little older can twist green tissue paper around tubes for stems; and a mite of six can become expert at dipping a stem into a pot of glue and sticking it into the little bubble of glass that is going to be a grape or a cherry in the evolution down the table. The child must be careful, however, not to press too hard on this fragile glass globule, as it breaks easily and cuts the fingers, and may, by an inadvertent rub, get into the eyes.

Italian families have almost a monopoly on artificial flower work, a trade which has the bad eminence of being the very poorest paid of the sweated trades—worse even than the notorious "pants" finishing. A little family of the dark-eyed poverilla—a mother and her children—working at artificial blossoms make a pretty sight; and the work is not harder than making willow whistles in the field. Stringing flower petals might be a labor for Titania and the fays. Yes; but a child soon tires of blowing thistle-down and picking daisies under the June skies, even though he may have the grass for a cushion and the butterfly for a companion. And

these little artificial flower makers, if too young to go to school, must sit all day at their tables in the "rush" for the Easter season, repeating some one unvarying motion hour after hour, week after week. If they go to school, they must work mornings till school-time and work evenings till they fall asleep; even longer, perhaps, if their elders can rouse them from their noddings.

These flowermakers, many of them, are children who know grass only as "something to keep off of." "Consider the lilies," would mean to them only a command to inspect a bunch of stark paper effigies on the shelf. "Go, lovely rose!" would mean only the sending forth of a handful of colored and crumpled cambric. This chopped and dyed rag-work is all that many of these children know of the glory of the flower and the splendor of the grass. "Gimme a flower, please," called a little worker as the writer once walked along with a bundle of bronzed oak leaves from the golden hills. "What is it? Did youse make it?" he asked, with shining eyes, and a kind of awe in his voice. "Oak lif, oak lif," he murmured as ecstatically as though he had been given apples of

Hesperides. Poor little beauty-hungry child he was, from the land where Shelley lies among the violets.

A visit to a "rose" factory makes one long for the skill of a Dickens or the passionate intensity of a Hugo. The girls work ten hours a day, some of them getting only a dollar and a half a week. The petals, chopped by the "boss" out of cambric, sateen, and velvet, are doled out by the "forelady". The girls sat at a long table, each with eyes riveted on her own pile. With swift, deft movements, using the little finger of one hand to dip and paste, each girl crumpled two or three bits of cloth about a bit of wire for a centre; strung on five petals, each with a touch of paste from the alert little finger; shaped and patted the whorl into a little nest; slipped the pivotal wire into a hollow green tube; and hooked the finished flower to dry on a flower-hung line in front of her. Swiftly, rhythmically, the ever flying fingers darted through the motions, keeping time to the unheard but clamorous metronome of need. Many of the girls had inflamed eyes and the strained look of headache—conditions that follow the workers in cheap dyed goods.

The faces were dulled, the gaze listless. Here was another illustration of the tragedy in our civilization—the work that deadens the worker. Will someone ever come with the wisdom to mix leisure and interest into the worker's life?

In the crowded districts of the Eastern cities lie the sterile fields of the artificial-flower makers. The factories are not far from the home shops. Stand near them for a few minutes and you will see the workers coming and going with big square boxes of flowers or the material for flowers. Let us follow one of these slaves of Flora, big or little, and we will come to a tenement, squalid and filthy. Let us enter one. We go up dark, grimy stairways into a two-room or a three-room apartment, supplied with a dim light from the air-shaft or the reeking court. Here remnants or beginnings of meals are always in sight, there being no stowaway places: here clothes and kettle hang amicably on the walls together, there being no closets.

A mother and her children are hard at work—all except an unbusiness-like baby that wastes precious time sleeping in a stuffy chamber not larger than your bathroom. Let

us watch the daisy of Wordsworth taking form in cheap cambric; for only the cheapest flowers are made in the tenements. A child picks up the pep, a sort of pin that has a soft yellow head to represent the stamens and pistils. This he sticks through two of the white cambric petals. Another child thrusts the lower end of the pep into glue; still another pushes it into the hollow stem, and lo, the daisy is in full flower! The mother weaves the blossoms into wreaths. Another child counts the wreaths or ties single flowers into bunches. This little accountant would not need to go into the higher calculus to reckon up the pennies earned by the whole family. Each child earns two cents an hour; the help of the mother raises the average to three cents an hour. Four cents a gross is the sweat-master's pay for the work. The mother puts in sixty hours a week, and the children put in all of their hours out of school. This combined family struggle brings in four dollars a week. Housekeeping and school-going are mere episodes in their brute struggle for existence. The whole aim of life for all these workers is flower-making; and the whole end of flower-making is four dol-

lars a week. To them the whole meaning of this lighted universe is—four dollars a week!

Another family in this tenement is making pansies. One girl is brilliant with the awful bloom of consumption; the others are sallow, and all are silent. In the "season" they work till one o'clock in the morning, and six dollars a week is the pay for their all of life. Truly, "Pansies are for thoughts" when the pansies come from a forcing house like this!

Apple blossoms and forget-me-nots are being made in another part of this grimy tenement. The children and the mother get sixteen cents for a dozen wreaths—four hours' work. Violets bloom in other grimy rooms. "Do you like to make these lovely things?" asked a visitor, watching a girl whose fingers were flying among the purple petals. "No, I hate them," was the reply. "I wish God had never made real flowers for us to copy them."

This toil of the little children at the flower tables would be a pretty sight if we could forget all the losses that go with the sorry gains. For some of them are losing for life their school chance; and all of them are losing their play chance, which carries with it

their chance for a sound body. Ignorance, joylessness, disease—this, too often, is the litany of their woes. The child is itself a flower, and should not give its bright color of youth to an effigy of bloom, made only to stick into an Easter hat. The child is itself a flower, and should be out bobbing and dipping in the bright breeze. When one knows the tragedy behind the flaunting festoons of our Easter Vanity Fair, the robberies of the children that go to the prospering of these vampire trades, they lose their beauty even as the delicate aigret loses its charm when one remembers that it has been murderously plucked from a mother bird.

For the benefit of those who prefer averages to particular cases, the following table of prices for "home work" is borrowed from Miss Elizabeth Watson, one of the best and most authoritative New York investigators:

WORK	PRICE PER PIECE
Making violets	3c a gross up
Making little roses	8c a gross
Making large roses (7 and 8 petals.)	16c to 18c a gross
Making baby dresses (Sewing up two sides, hemming skirt, making sleeves and sewing them in, gathering and binding the neck into a	45c a dozen

band, sewing on one button and making one buttonhole.)	
Embroidering crepe de chine dresses.... (It takes 10 days to complete one.)	$5.00 a dress
Making kimonas ..... (4 seams—2 sleeve seams, hemming and binding.)	4c a dozen
Men's neckwear—	
Cotton string ties	5c a dozen
Silk ties ..... (Lined, turned and pressed.)	15c a dozen
Sorting and mounting buttons on cards..	2c a dozen cards
Embroidery and tucking shirtwaists (if material included) ..... (Woman working from 5 o'clock in morning until 8 o'clock at night can complete one a day.)	$1.00 a piece
Plaiting hat straw ..... (Season trade only, lasting 4 months in fall and winter.)	10c a dozen yards
Embroidering silk stockings	20c to 45c a pair
Muslin underwear ..... (Running in ribbons, making 3 buttonholes and sewing on 3 buttons.)	15c to 25c a dozen
Cutting out embroideries, trimming scallops, etc.	5c a dozen yards
Trimming embroidered handkerchiefs ..	25c a hundred
Making baby bootees	25c a dozen
Making Irish lace collars	50c to $1.50 a piece
Making Irish lace medallions	35c to 50c a dozen
Making Irish lace by yard—insertion....	15c a yard

There can be no question that bitter need is behind this tragedy of "home work." Human beings would not drudge for such

pittances except under the spur of terrible necessity. The investigation of cases where tenement people have applied for licenses to sew at home have developed endless distresses that call to very heaven for pity.

One woman was a widow forced to leave home to sew in a factory. Her children were the homekeepers. A tiny girl was rubbing and wringing at the family washing down in the reeking courtyard among a bevy of rag pickers. A little boy was caring for the baby in the dark, musty rooms upstairs, where lately the water pipes had burst and flooded everything. The mother wanted to sew here in order to care for the baby while the children went to school and the boys sold papers morning and evening. This was her pitiful plea—to be allowed to work at home so that her children might have a better chance. And yet the stench and filth of her wretched "home", the danger of infecting a hundred homes from her grimy, germ-laden walls and floors, made "home work" impossible under the law. The woman must continue to go to the factory, leaving behind her the unguarded and unmothered older children to care for the baby and the house.

Even more calamitous than cases like this is the plight of widows unable to work themselves, who must not only keep their children from school, but must send them out into the bread-fight—out to factory or mill or mine, to become the wage-earners of the home. God knows, the widow's need is often great; and in denying to mothers the right to work at home for their helpless young, and in denying to little children the right to work for needy mothers, it may seem that the law sets a cruel foot upon the neck of the broken poor. But for the larger good of humanity these denials must be: the public and the child must be protected, and the safeguard against inhumanity lies in the state's recognition of motherhood as a service.

Society supports its indigents, incompetents and criminals. Why should not society come also to the rescue of the worthy mother and child, thus preventing want and illness and crime?

X

THE CURSE ON THE CANNERIES

AS of old the Israelites yearned to save the delicate manna for another day, so for generations mankind desired in vain to hold for the winter the savors of the fruits and vegetables that make one of the greatest delights of the summer and the fall.

It seems incredible, the groping and blundering of the early days of canning. The last century was well on its way before the idea got a start, and then only chance seemed to determine the saving or the spoiling of the material canned. Canners whose goods "went bad" had for their explanation only wild guesses, little better than the guess that is now current in parts of Italy when cooking goes wrong: "The devil must have switched his tail through it."

In 1812 those were rash experimenters who dared eat the love-apple (the tomato) in any form. And the housewife would as soon have put the rank skunk-cabbage into a salad.

People scoffed at the visionaries who began to boil and bottle this exotic invader of the gardens; and, lo! now the tomato leads all the rest of our canned goods, needing 350,000,000 cans yearly to go around.

It was not until the 90's were half over that science let us into the secret of successful canning. Then we learned that fruit is spoiled by the schizomycetes and saccharomycetes that are lying in wait in the air about us, and we learned that boiling and instantaneous sealing will prevent this ruin. Through that bit of wisdom, canning became a dependable art; but it was not until machinery came with cunning processes to multiply a man's power tenfold, or even a hundredfold, that canning became a titanic industry.

And now canneries with their fifty-seven and more varieties of wares are lordly laborhirers; and their factories and sheds and shacks supply work a large part of the year. The "r" months, from September to April, provide cove oysters and shrimps to keep the canneries going after the land crops are harvested. Here is an enormous industry, with stupendous output and colossal returns.

Every year the canneries send out 200,000,000 cans of corn and 340,000,000 cans of salmon, and so on—enough to corduroy a road across the Rockies. Indeed, there are economists who say that without canned foods and their possibility of feeding multitudes, our great cities would never have attained their present enormous proportions. Nor would we have our variety of arts and trades, had not the art of canning liberated the people from continual gardening. Fully half the quantity of food that our canneries preserve for us once went to the hogs or to the waste-heap. Canning also prevents famine in times of poor crops, offering a keepable and portable supply of food.

The canneries offer us a billion cans of food a year, and at the same time they rake in fortunes for their owners.

Now, what has this mighty and beneficent industry, this rich strong business, to do with child labor? It has this to do with it: Over 7,000 children as independent workers, or as mothers' helpers, are working in our canneries—working in summer during long, hard hours made for play-time and rest-time and sleep-time. Does not this record cast a dark

shadow upon the ministration of these canneries, which preserve for us the flesh of fruit and vegetable, of fish and fowl, while, at the same time, they destroy the strength of the youth of the nation.

Men and women are also caught into the bondage of over-work and over-hours, saving perishable food at the expense of their own bodies; but it is only for the children that I speak on these pages. I plead for tired, bleeding little hands, for bent and aching backs, for weary dragging feet. These young children, for whom we should be an earthly providence, must help to gather and prepare material for millions of cans and kegs and bottles, to hoard up the measure of the year's harvest.

There are over four thousand canning plants in the United States. But some of the largest of these (a commentary upon efficiency) do not use children. Perhaps these employers have not been moved by altruistic feeling, save only in a few cases. They appear to have been governed by the fact that even the beggarly smallness of the child's wage does not compensate them for his waste and carelessness.

Although the law-makers of New York in 1905 plainly intended to shut out from the canneries, as from other factories, children under the age of 14, this intent was defeated till 1913 by a decision of Justice Mayer which declared cannery shacks not to be factories. This purblind decision for eight years made possible a recurrent child-slaving that no doubt has left traces for life upon hundreds of children. Happily now New York is purged of the evil.

The calendar of the eastern canneries runs in this fashion: berries in June; peas in July; beans in August; corn in September and October; tomatoes from August on, also beets and spinach and pumpkin.

The pea is the canned thing that gets by with least aid from the child, who in this case needs only to pick out broken and decayed ones from the mass. A simple operation so far as the hands are concerned. But examining constantly moving peas, from 10 to 15 and sometimes 18 hours a day, involves serious eye-strain; especially when the work is done, as often happens, with one electric bulb, unprotected, providing light for about four feet of table length.

The work is usually done near steaming vats, amid deafening noise from the machinery and the continuous dropping of thousands of cans, singly from the floor above.

Peas are now sown by steam drills; mowed down, vines and all, by machinery; podded, assorted and poured into cans, all by the manipulation of an intelligent machine. But when the cans are full, a child of eight years can drop caps upon them while they are passing in endless line on the conveyor—a task that requires quickness, deftness, continued vigilance. A child can also hull strawberries, stem cherries and plums, and string and snip beans, peel tomatoes and apples and husk corn; and thus, if he will not persist in looking out the windows at nesting birds or fluttering flies, he can be very useful in helping to build up the glittering fortunes of the cannery barons.

In these lines of drudgery hundreds of children work. Canneries in the rush of the season's canning, work their hands from four in the morning till midnight. Of course children will fall asleep under such hours, and cannot be held to the full tempo of what Jack London calls the " labor trance ".

Poor accommodations are the rule in these canneries—old barns, old sheds and no decencies of life. Children in all these "family outings" for the season, these "joyous family picnics" as they are called in the rosy optimism of some of the owners, leave school two weeks before the term closes and come back two weeks or more late. Thus the shrimp and oyster shellers, who go South after the fruit season, have an orgy of work running nearly the whole year round; and if they are foreigners, the children are likely to grow up as foreign as if they had never passed Ellis Island.

Corn can now be husked by machinery; and it is so husked in the best establishments. Beets may be topped and skinned, and tomatoes cored, by machinery; but some canners have not installed expert machinery; and, for lack of a wise machine, tomatoes must still be peeled, and string beans snipped by the human hand.

Now a child can work with corn, beans, and tomatoes, and at the forty-a-minute capping of flying cans; and in these things his puny strength can be used to serve the machine and build fortunes for someone.

Delaware, Maine, New Jersey, Maryland and the Gulf States, all save Florida, have canners that exploit the children. Canning, by the nature of its material, is necessarily a speeded industry. Whole families of Poles, Bohemians and Italians are herded for this work under the lead of the parasitic padrones, who contract to ship them like machines from state to state.

The father and mother both working make the splendid sum of $2.75 a day, and feed themselves. Children under ten can make 25 cents in ten hours: children from 14 to 16 can make 90 cents for the same time. For skinning 40 pounds of tomatoes the emolument is 4 cents. Inspectors report children working till 9-15 at night and beginning at 4 in the morning. Often they fall asleep at their benches.

Now, husking corn and stringing beans are not very arduous labors considered by themselves; not harder perhaps than throwing ball or jumping rope. But husking corn and stringing beans continued hour after hour, all day and into the evening, become racking to young muscles and nerves, as does the continuous dropping of water upon the head

of the Chinese prisoner. Any child pushed for long weeks into such a rat-run of work is getting ready for the highroad of bodily degeneration. Muscles and nerves to be efficient must have enough rest to counterbalance their weariness: otherwise the fatigue toxins are left in the body to poison it. Many foreign parents are merciless in driving their little ones to this long-extended work. American parents are not so merciless.

But are there not laws against this child labor, you ask? Yes; but complaisant foremen often avoid the age-limit regulation by letting even the youngest children come into the canning sheds under the genial title of "mother's helpers." Of 189 children in one factory, 53 were independent workers: the others were "mothers' helpers." No one denies that the work the little fingers do is just as efficacious, whether the child is on the salary roll, or whether its parent draws its little pittance. In some factories where the work-hours of the child are limited by law, the little ones sweep and scrub before beginning their canning work proper. These extra

hours are not put down in the cannery ledger for the inspector's eye.

Anyone who has ever ventured into a cannery knows of the continual rumble and clatter of the hissing of steam, the jar and whirr of the machines, the rattle of conveyors—knows of the floors wet and sticky with juice—knows of the nauseating mixture of the smells of sugar and fruit. It is all revolting to the senses and to the nerves. But what must be its effects on children during the interminable hours they are condemned to this limbo, with parents or superintendents prodding them to work.

New York, if it obeys the new law, will show no more of the inhumanities reported in the summaries of 1913 by the State Factory Investigating Commission: but still the same abominations go on in all the "trucking" states save Florida; still children of tender years are in this rush and roar, snipping beans, cutting corn, sorting peas. And the spectacle of these little human machines, some of them with their fingers wrapped in bandages (the result of having them split in their work) may be seen in many a canning shack.

Dr. Francis E. Fronczak, Commissioner of Health for Buffalo, deplored in 1913 before the Investigating Commission the evil conditions going with the employment of women and girls in packing-houses and storerooms in New York. He says:

"These wages were so small that the children were forced into the canneries to add $2 or $3 a week to the families' support for working hours almost as long as those put in by matured women.

"Surroundings in which these slaves work are such as to breed immorality. Often large numbers of women, girls, boys and men are housed together in such a way that there has been a great increase in the number of young girls who go astray."

Shocking Conditions in Louisiana

From the South, whose chivalrous watchword is "women and children first," come reports just as revolting to the heart. The Rev. Father Ramboult, condemning the child-labor conditions of Louisiana, denounces canneries as the worst sinners, and calls for inspection laws and officials to cover the State. Speaking before the Louisiana Child Labor

Association meeting, in New Orleans in 1914, he said:

"Animals are being treated better than the people working in most of the canneries in this State. Conditions couldn't be worse. Horrible filth prevails in most of them. You find whole families slaving in them—the father, mother and children.

"It is bad, particularly in regard to the children. They are forced to go to work at 5 or 6 o'clock in the morning and work until 6 o'clock."

He explained that these families, mostly foreigners, come down from the North or elsewhere, and provide cheap labor for the canneries.

"Sometimes," he continued, "with these families 'everybody works but father.' The father lies around and takes life easy on the money which his wife and children make in these canneries."

Regarding the Bureau of Labor for the State, he said:

"The powers of this bureau are very limited. The State's appropriation for the maintenance of this department is so insignificant that nothing can be done.

"Labor must be cheap for factory owners to make immense profits. So they take children. *In order to make a few people immensely wealthy, thousands of homes are being wrecked.*

"Our labor laws in this State are almost never considered. The inspection of factories is carried on in the city to a certain extent; but outside of the city, throughout the State, there is never any inspection. The bureau hasn't the money to employ inspectors."

Father Ramboult's words ought to be echoed by clergymen in every state, for no section seems exempt from such inhumanities. The late riots, for example, in the Durst hop-fields in Yolo County, California, were engendered by the beastly conditions under which three thousand hop-pickers, men, women and children, were gathered by specious advertisements from all over the Coast. They were asked by Durst to sign an agreement to surrender a certain percent of their wages if they did not stay till the job was finished. The workers could not endure the filthy and niggardly conditions. Many were forced to an early departure; and so the ranch-owner reaped a rich harvest of rebates.

For all this horde of three thousand people, camping on the unsheltered fields, there were only eleven toilets. These were miserable makeshifts used in common by men, women and children; and in a day or two they were beyond all use. The water supply was totally insufficient. In a short time the two wells on the dry plains were exhausted, and the water wagons were inadequate; and Durst's lemonade, made of citric acid, was five cents a glass. It is not much wonder that disease, mutiny, and murder were the deplorable outcome.*

* Some of our labor conditions are ghastly, as shown by this story; but let us hope they are not so ghastly as they are in parts of England, as shown by this clipping from *T. P.'s Weekly:*

"Jam? Ugh!

"Mr. W. N. Willis vouches for some serious facts in connection with the jam-making industry. He examined a well-known factory lately. The fruit-boiling pans and service generally were clean, but the conditions under which the fruit was 'cleaned' was such as to defy decent description:

"'The pickers are nearly all "casuals"—they come in only for a day or two. You see that woman in the corner,' said Mr. Willis's guide, 'she's about the only picker who works regularly; she lives in a common lodging-house, so she can't be very clean, sleeping amongst tramp women, can she?' A few judicious questions elicited that she had spent the night walking the streets, and had made no toilet since her very perfunctory one at the last lodging-house she had slept in. It

First Steps in Cannery Reform

Sometimes the packers lay the blame of their summer rush to "the act of God." The weather ripens the crop and the canner must use it before it spoils. Yet it has been found in States where children are not available that double shifts and cold storage and succession of crops (planting so that all will not ripen at once, a trick which every gardener knows) all these methods can be employed instead of the hit-or-miss methods so much in vogue, and they would save the cyclonic speed demanded when no forethought is used.

In the case of peas (the most likely of all vegetables to deteriorate by waiting) it has been found that frequent baths of water will keep them practically unchanged. Such preparation—prearrangements for progres-

is no exaggeration to say that her hands were filthy; and Mr. Willis saw stripes of white here and there where the fruit juice had washed the dirt from the poor, thin fingers. Although he pitied the woman, he felt indignant that her kind should be allowed to touch what was destined to be food for the public.'

"And when one goes on to read about the consumptives and scrofulous people who shred and 'cleanse' the damaged fruit, when we read of the wooden seeds, the turnip pulp and the rest of the disgusting business, a sort of sickly despair comes over me."

sive planting, for holding vegetables in cold storage or in baths, for providing relays of workers instead of lashing on the same crew —these things we are told by experts would counteract the rush that is the easy excuse for " the speeding up " that calls in the children. Such expedients would put canning in the list of reasonable occupations.

Of course it might be something of a hardship to install machinery to husk corn and shell peas. The haphazard calling in of children from the highways and byways is much easier perhaps; and to some the child seems indispensable. But, remember, it is not so very long ago that the lamp-lighter and the chimney-sweep and the cash-girl were looked upon as indispensable to our urgent need of light and heat and trade. And yet these are gone like the snows of yester year, as all child laborers must go. For child labor is a more atrocious mistake than colt labor would be, and no one thinks of harnessing the colt to the plow.

The tenements and factories in the city are kept up to certain nominal health conditions (poor as they are) and there is no reason why a cannery should be allowed any less

cleanliness of surroundings and decency of conduct. There should be clean, dry sheds or tents for each family. An eight-hour day, with a living minimum wage, should be enforced under penalty. Small children should have shelter and yard and trained matron in charge, in regular day-nursery system. If children are compelled on account of being with parents to lose school, a school should be held for them under a competent teacher in co-operation with the regular teachers from whom the child comes. Under proper conditions the canning season might thus furnish a wholesome outing for the family, and add to the manual and mental education of the child.

Fresh Berries—Worn-Out Children

Going berrying! The words bring up happy memories of days out-of-doors, of shady gardens, of flowery meadows, of heaping pails of rich-tinted fruits to be eaten with ambrosial cream and delectable cake. But when berries are in market again and your table bears its rotation of pungent strawberry, luscious blackberry, and tart cranberry, re-

Photo from National Child Labor Committee

THE PARASITE PADRONE HAS HIS PHALANX OF FAMILIES ENGAGED AHEAD FOR THE SEASON, CHOOSING THOSE WHO HAVE A RETINUE OF CHILDREN

member that in the background somewhere, scattered all the way from New England to Florida, an army of children, tired, haggard, hurried and harried, has helped to gather these fragrant refreshing fruits for you.

The parasite padrone has his phalanx of families engaged ahead for the season, choosing those who have a retinue of children. He transports them any distance, perhaps all the way from the Philadelphia tenements to the Southern States. Little backs begin to bend all day in the sun to pick, pick, pick berries, among thorns, in the marshes, often tormented by heat and insects, and always driven and threatened and frequently accelerated by curses and blows.

And for what reward? Not for the joy of living. For all the child's part in all the summer's pomp is sweat and sorrow. His uttermost toil adds only a few cents to the family income. He gets only a hasty bite of ill-prepared food which his mother must get ready before or after her day's work. He gets a few hours' sleep on a ramshackle cot or perhaps on the floor; and these hard conditions endure nine or ten hours a day, seven

days in a week, during all the months of the berry season. Berries are perishable, but how about the children?

Berry-picking was once a joyful thing and could be joyful now. Elizabeth Towne, the editor of "Nautilus," a woman with an observant eye, tells how it used to be in the West in berry time. Has that idyllic life gone forever? Have we gained enough to compensate? Here is her picture of the old-time berrying:

"Twenty years ago Mount Tabor, Oregon, was one vast stretch of little berry farms, ranging from half an acre to five or six acres, with an occasional plutocrat on a ten-acre berry farm. When strawberries were ripe everybody went into the strawberry fields. Not from compulsion, but from choice. When my boy was seven or eight years old he went into the berry patches and picked all day, eight or nine hours a day, just from sheer love of it. Not for money—only once in a while did he take the money which he earned. As a rule he turned his berries over to the little boys who were picking for pay, whose parents needed the nickels.

"I knew whole families that looked for-

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ward with joy to the berrying season, when every member of the family picked berries for dear life from morning until night. The money kept them working steadily, but love of the green things and the berries, and the picnic joy of it was the chief factor in their work. And the fields were an oasis of strawberries in an otherwise desert life of daily grind and daily plugging away in the schoolroom.

"Most of these people lived in Mount Tabor all the year round. How much more would they have gained from the strawberry fields if they had been cooped up for ten months of the year in the slums of a big city?"

Cannot so rich an industry as berry-raising afford to have at least comfortable roof and bed for the pickers, and to have one big shed and yard set apart with a matron in charge, where children might be cared for in day-nursery fashion while the mother works if she must?

Does the cranberry bring to your mind happy associations of holiday and friends and feasting? Well, to some the thought of this pretty fruit is linked with memories of utter

weariness and misery. Between 1,000 and 1,500 children harvest the cranberry crop, which annually brings in a quarter of a million dollars to New Jersey alone. Little of this money of course goes to the pickers, mostly Italians, who gather the coral-colored fruit from the low vines in the boggy fields. The growers do not actually make these conditions; they merely condone them. They pay the parsimonious padrone, and ease their conscience by letting him be responsible for the evil herding and harrying of the pickers.

And one of the most distressing things about this annual penitential picking is that it is all obsolete and unnecessary and (oh list, money-changers!) it is nearly five times as costly as the method that dispenses with children. On Cape Cod and in parts of New Jersey, cranberries are harvested by a sort of "scoop." This slotted, spade-like implement, thrust in at the base of the vine and lifted upward, brings the berries with it. By this means a barrel of cranberries is picked for 25 cents, while in the hand-method, the child-method, the cost is $1.20 a barrel.

The padrone revels in his power over these

defenceless workers, who seldom know English speech or American customs. Frequently he charges them at the rate of $2 for an 80-cent ticket from their homes to the berry-fields. He may also victimize them by measuring short their returns. Ten cents a peck is all he allows them for their picking, and he is the judge of the amount handed in.

Mr. Owen Lovejoy, the efficient secretary of the National Child Labor Committee, says of the cranberry workers: "Children as young as four or five years work regularly during the picking season. Hundreds of children are deprived thus of the first four or five weeks of school. The housing conditions on many bogs are unspeakably unsanitary, and the whole situation calls for careful attention."

It is the irreparable school losses, like this one spoken of by Mr. Lovejoy, that often ruin the child's slender chance of an education. He never recovers his lost ground; he is cast back to another grade, losing pride and heart as he struggles on in a quicksand of confusion. He cannot extricate himself, and so sinks from school life forever.

We are told that in Maryland one fifth of the inhabitants are living on the canning industry. Child labor is everywhere. In 1906, fifty of the most prominent physicians of Baltimore, asking for improved labor laws, sent this appeal to the Maryland Legislature:

"Child labor produces depravation of mind and morals, and means perversion of family life. We are persuaded that the employment of children under fourteen in mills and factories is most wasteful of human energy, is a monstrous injustice to American children and an occasion for remedial legislation."

Child Slavery in Shrimp and Oyster Beds

As soon as the berry season (from strawberry to cranberry time inclusive) is over, the zealous padrone heads his human drove for the oyster and shrimp beds in the South. And all things considered, it would seem that the children of the shrimp and oyster canneries of the Gulf States have more turns of the thumbscrews than are inflicted on children elsewhere.

Three hundred children have been counted

standing ankle-deep in blood and refuse in the Chicago stock-yards, learning to prepare meats for our tables. Seven thousand sweat and tug in laundries to make clean our linen. We have seen children as little human shuttles in the cotton factories, as little human sifters in the coal-breakers. In all these and in many another toil (for there are two hundred gainful occupations for children) we have seen the little ones put to painful drudgery instead of brief hours of bracing work, followed by proper hours of rest.

But the child labor on the bleak gulf shores, on the flinty floors of up-piled shells, seems more hopelessly wretched than child labor anywhere else. The sardine packing in Maine has its sorrows and its little martyrs too, but the shrimp and oyster work is worse. Pass Christian (why desecrate the word Christian?) is one of the spots where this work is at its dreariest.

President Wilson was at this place on his outing last year. He saw the shuckers in their draughty sheds, little children working their shift with their elders in the steam and the blistering wind, their hands torn and bleeding. For beside the sharpness of the

shells and the tools, which may lacerate the flesh, there exudes from the head of the shrimp an acid which tortures the fingers; and to add to the aches there is the constant chill of the ice in which the perishable sea-creatures have to be packed. The oysters are partly opened by steam, and then fully opened by a knife and dropped into a pot. Little hands can do this as well as big, and little backs do not have so far to stoop; for stoop, stoop they must even though the soft bones never straighten from the bending.

Five cents a pot is paid the small hireling, and there are four pounds in a pot—more than the ordinary family will use in any dinner. A child that is alert to join the millionaire class can earn as much as twenty cents a day. "He that would thrive must rise at five," says the prudent Poor Richard. Young oyster shuckers and fruit-canners rise earlier than five. Look for them in the peerage of dollars by-and-by! But if you fail to find them there, look in the human scrap-heaps of our charitable or penal institutions, where enervated youth, early out-worn, strengthless, spiritless, dehumanized, fades to the grave.

In oyster shucking, a child of seven earns about 25 cents a day, and at ten years of age he may reach 50 cents or more. But a rapid adult worker seldom earns more than a dollar a day. The cloud that hangs over the future of these young children, has it a silver lining?

Here are extracts from the reports of investigators at these Gulf-State canneries—reports that sound as if they might be records of the reeking waste-heaps of the cavemen. Edward F. Brown, a capable and careful investigator of the Child Labor Committee, says:

"On February 19th at six o'clock in the morning, I heard the canning factory whistle blow at Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi. At 6-45 I was at the factory and found 12 children apparently under twelve years of age, and three children apparently between twelve and fourteen years of age. At 7-20 I counted fourteen children under twelve, the youngest actually at work being eight years old."

On February 22nd (a public holiday honoring the founder of our free country "whose name is Opportunity") this same factory started work at 3 o'clock in the morn-

ing. At 4-45 Mr. Brown was there and found children at work. There were fifteen boys and eleven girls, and their approximate ages ran up the gamut from seven and eight to fourteen.

Lewis W. Hine, another member of the Child Labor Committee, who backs his words with photographs that utter grim truth, speaks this way of the Mississippi canneries:

" Come with us to one of these canneries at 3 o'clock some morning. Here is the crude, shedlike building with a long dock at which the oyster boats unload their cargoes. Near the dock is the ever present shell-pile, a monument of mute testimony to the patient toil of little fingers. It is cold, damp, dark. The whistle blew some time ago, and the weary workers dressed themselves, slipped into their meagre garments, snatched a bite to eat (there is no time for breakfast now) and hurried to the shucking shed. The padrone told me, ' Ef day don' git up, I go git dem up.' See those little ones over there, stumbling through over the shell-piles, munching a piece of bread and rubbing their heavy eyes. Work has already begun: little ones

of six, seven and eight years of age take their places with the adults, and are at work all day."

In another brief paragraph, Mr. Hine gives a vivid sketch of the tragedy of these little Gulf-Shore workers. He spoke to one of the little oyster shuckers:

"What is your name, little girl?" "Dunno." "How old are you?" "Dunno." "How many pots do you shuck in a day?" "Dunno." And the pity of it is that they do not know. What then do they know? Enough to stand patiently with the rest, picking up the hard, dirty clusters of shells, deftly prying them open, dropping the meat into the pot; and then to go through this process with another and another and another, until after many minutes the pot is full; a relief—she can carry it over to the weigher and rest, doing nothing, a minute, and walk back,—such a change from the dreary standing, reaching, prying and dropping—minute upon minute, hour upon hour, day upon day, month after month. Or perchance, for variety, the catch might have been shrimp, and then the hours of work are shorter; but the shrimp are icy cold, and the

blood in one's fingers congeals, and the fingers become so sore that they welcome the oysters again."

Some of these children never see the inside of a school, because they go directly from the berry fields of the North to the oyster beds of the South. Unfortunately, all "oyster months" are school months. And while many of the sea-fish canning States on the Gulf Coast have seen fit to pass laws giving the exact measurement of the oyster or shrimp or lobster that must be protected in its growth, only one state (Mississippi) has passed a law to protect the little children from this work, which interferes with *their* growth physically and mentally.

In these Gulf-State canneries, the pleasant padrone, with his minions gathered from the slums, charges his dumb driven cattle any price that looks good to him for their fares to and from this chance for bread. He also runs a commissary department from which they must buy at prices that please his soaring fancy; furthermore, he demands at the end of the season some present from each worker as a memento. I trust that each little slave, in seeking a suitable gift, does

not content himself with anything less than a silver loving cup.

Peonage laws cannot catch this unspeakable padrone, as he evades the appearance of compulsion. How are we going to fling off this Sindbad of labor? The accommodations that the padrone sets up for his serfs consist of a shack with a four-foot sleeping bunk on one side for the adults, and with mattresses on the floor for the children. Here the family must eat, cook and sleep. The squalor and lack of sanitation are unspeakable.

Of course there is a law against this ghastly working of the children; yet such shames as are recorded here are common, for who is on the ground to fight for the child? Twelve years is the age limit in that region—a grotesquely inadequate figure at best. But as Father Ramboult has told us, "Violation of the law, not obedience to it, is too often the practice."

We have what is known as the Child Labor Map, and there is one especially black spot on it: that spot covers four States—Georgia, Alabama, and the two Carolinas. These do not limit the hours nor the years of a child's work.

The Bluff at Schooling Little Workers

Sometimes a grotesque semblance of a school is kept up by the sea-fish baron. But he does it by forcing the children to work four hours before school: then, after three hours of schooling, they snatch a hurried luncheon at one o'clock, and work four hours more. This they do for five days. On Saturday they put in an alleged "half-day," consisting of eight or nine hours.

In Alabama (the name means, "Here we rest," and the State motto proclaims this alluring legend)—in Alabama the law declares that a child must go to school at least eight weeks in the year. Now, the Merrimac Manufacturing Company, we are told, keeps a school going for eight weeks, at their own expense, and thus they fulfil the law for their little wage-slaves.

But hold, don't sing hosannahs yet! They arrange that the school session shall begin at six in the morning and end at twelve: this is done that the children may spend the other half of the day working in their mill!

But what happens to the school-room in the afternoon? Is it left vacant for the

mice to romp on the floor and for the flies to sing in the pane? Not at all. In the afternoon another session of the school begins; another child battalion is called in for instruction during the six hours of the afternoon—the children that have been working in the mill during all the morning hours.

Now, if the school term were eight months instead of eight weeks, and if the schooling ran three or four hours and the working ran three or four hours for five days in the week, and if all this were carried on under cleanly and beautiful surroundings, no one perhaps could object to the system. A work-and-study scheme of this sort is carried on in certain parts of England. Indeed a system of this kind might be found to solve the difficult problem of vocational education. But the Merrimac procedure (cramming for six hours and laboring for six) is a ghastly caricature of education: it is child exhaustion, child drudgery, child collapse. And miserable as the education is, the young folk get only eight weeks of it.

But there is yet another sorrow for the children in the South. Cotton has conditioned the territory in labor matters. If the

Negro had not been profitable on the cotton fields, slavery would not have flourished in the South any more than it did in New England. But in some regions, notably in Texas, the child has been drawn into the cotton harvesting. Cotton has been called the Herod of the South, and it is surely devastating the future of thousands of children. Is it not pitiful to think that a great commerce like this must, in any degree, be balanced upon the strength of the growing child?

A host of witnesses tell us that from sun-up to sun-down in the time of cotton harvest, the child with his elders is picking cotton in the fields. Even the orphan-asylum children are called out to join the locust army that must supply the bales that whiten the wharves of the world. Each child has his bag fitted to his shoulders to trail down his back to his feet, and he thrusts the cotton into convenient openings. Up and down through the fields, dragging these bags, crawl the army of child pickers looking like a resurrection of saurians.

A quarter of a million children are in the cotton fields of Texas. Even a baby of four,

properly prodded and losing no time with teddy bears or afternoon naps, can pick from six to eight pounds a day; and a boy of five, not fooling away his hours in a kindergarten, can pick thirty pounds. Four children in one family, children from four to sixteen, have the proud record of picking in a day four times their own weight. A boy of ten, who spends no precious time at school or swimming-hole, and who has a proper appreciation of the high commercial end he serves in helping on a "bumper" crop of cotton, can pick a hundred pounds in a day. Think of how many motions, all in one dull monotony, must go to the bagging of one hundred pounds of a fluffy mass like cotton. Think of the vacuum in a mind engaged in gathering together this nothingness all day long, from blistering August to bitter December.

Is there not some way to get a living without this wasting of life? Is it worth while to sell one's eyes for candles?

XI

THE CHILD IN THE PERILS OF THE STREETS

TRAVELERS delight to tell of the picturesque and poetic street life of Naples, with whole families at the doorway or on the sidewalk, working, eating, visiting, the mother caring for the children who are playing all about them. But this extension of the family life into the street is very different from the grim life of the street-worker as we know it in our big cities of America.

We have an army of children at large and alone upon our avenues and alleys. Its members are engaged in newspaper selling, in boot-blacking, in delivering messages and goods: they are pedlars and venders and barkers at street stands.

This street phase of the lives of the children of the nation, with its long penumbra of evils, has not been studied as have the sterner-seeming industries of mine and mill and fac-

tory and field. But while it is not so arduous, nor so dangerous to physical health as many other occupations, still there is no other occupation so devastating, so debasing to the mind, as street hawking or street running.

Child labor laws are coping continually with other forms of child waste and child woe; but the young street toilers in many cities have been left almost unbefriended and undefended. Neither the heart nor the brain of America has yet grasped the ruin that is under this life of the child, this life which to careless onlookers appears so picturesque and so free.

The open street, like the open sea, is an inviting thing to the mind of man. It is one of the few places where all may meet as equals under sun or rain; but only a John Bunyan could adequately portray the danger of the cities with their pitfalls for the young unguarded feet.

The census of 1900 gives no proper idea of the number of children engaged in the various gainful street occupations. The very nature of these street vocations, with no head nor headquarters, would of course make the

census inaccurate. So 6,000 newsboys are all we find listed for the entire nation; while there are perhaps as many as that in any one large city. The listing of boot-blacks at 8,230 for the whole country is just as absurdly understated.

The only exact information we have of newspaper-selling and boot-blacking comes from cities awakened in some degree to the necessity of the study and control of street trades. In Cincinnati, in 1909, some 1,951 boys were licensed to sell papers. In Chicago, in one count, it was discovered that 12 per cent. of the first-grade school children, and 65 per cent. of the fifth-grade school children, with the other grades in ratio, did street work besides coming to school—each pupil working from twenty to fifty hours a week. In Boston, in 1910, some 2,664 licenses were issued to newsboys, pedlars and boot-blacks of ages ranging from eleven to thirteen.

Besides children like these, with some sort of a home and some semblance of getting an education, there is in every city, a roving, homeless class of street-boys skirting the edge of the lock-up, sleeping in park or alley,

or in some dark nook—a class counted by no one save by Him who notes the sparrow's fall.

The Fate of the Newsboy

A newsboy rushes toward you on the street, selling his wares, takes your coin and skims away to other buyers, shouting out his list of papers. He swings himself upon your car, sells and collects, and swings off again into the crowd. You admire the swiftness, the assurance, the bird-like poise and sweep; but it is all a piteous little show to those who know how darkly he is dowered with the satanic wisdom of the street, and how deep are the dishonesty and impurity in which so many of his kind are sunken.

We have become so habituated to the newsboy, he has taken so pleasantly in our imagination the place of the chimney-sweep and the little match-girl, that we have accepted him as a part of the furnishings of the landscape. We forget that he is not at all a necessity, and that in other countries he is absent, his place being filled, as in London, with elderly men; his place being filled in Paris and Berlin by plentiful corner stands.

The newsboy in the eyes of the law is a merchant, forsooth, and therefore he slips out of the protective reach of the child-labor statutes. His "mercantile standing" and gain is a pitiful price to pay for the selling of his birthright of opportunity. The corner man pays 60 cents for one hundred copies of a paper, for which the public pay one dollar. He hands these out, fifteen or twenty at a time, to newsboys. A thirteen-year-old boy with a good stand (and stands are guarded by their owners as Horatius guarded the Bridge) may earn 80 cents a day. Salesboys working for him make perhaps 15 cents for three hours' work. Boys of course may sell for themselves as well as on commission; sometimes they own delivery routes or work as deliverers.

Now this does not seem very hard work, and it appears to have the advantage of being done out of doors; although the germ-laden dust of a city street is far from an ideal thing to breathe. But hold—no great rejoicing even here! For in the cold winter nights in the great cities, the little newsies gather on the gratings in front of the big department stores and other buildings, where

the electric fans in the basements are forcing the foul air out into the open. Here they huddle in shivering squads for the sake of the grateful warmth—here they stand in the foul blasts from below, stand until frequently they are deadened by the decayed air, many of them falling down in a sodden stupor to sleep for hours in the vile contagion. What wonder that the little fellows, breathing in this foulness, are stricken with tuberculosis and other plagues.

Still, when not breathing this decayed air, and at times when the temperature is not too frigid, nor too torrid, this out-of-door atmosphere is an improvement on the lint of the cotton mill and the grime of the coal mine, and the invisible powder of the glass factory. But the haphazard nature of the newsboy's work, the exposure to evil sight and sound, the physical perils, the lack of direction in using energy, the irregularity and indiscretion in eating and drinking, the imprudence in spending the little earnings—all these work against integrity of character and stability of health.

The idleness after the feverish rush hours provides every chance for vicious companion-

ship and tutelage. Gambling is an invariable habit in the hours of waiting. Example and opportunity of small thievery and knavery are constant. Newsboys rob other sleeping newsboys. "I haven't got change," they cry, and the fleeing passenger of car or ferry surrenders his nickel or his dime on this false plea. We have all been followed by the whining small boy, with his mosquito-like piping—"Please, mister, buy my last paper so I can go home"—a tawdry little drama kept up till the hoard of papers under his jacket is unloaded on the compassionate. Smoking is of course acquired early; and the cigarette adorns every mouth in hours of idleness when funds are flush.

Lack of regular training in any line is one of the handicaps of the young news-seller's career. In other vocations, however cruel, there is some sense of method, some conception of orderly action or of team-work. But a news-seller's hours are the wind's hours—all hours. When the boys work before and after school, in a few hours of feverish rush they have spent the vitality that would carry them through the day's study. Often they fall asleep over their

books. Generally they are behind in their grades. Lacking all training that makes for skill and accuracy, knowing the unnatural excitement of the street, the boy finds the school dull and stale, and he soon escapes from it. Home, too, grows wearisome if he happens to have a home. Many boys, too early independent, lodge away from their parents to escape restraints, and be near business and pleasure. Said one small newsy to Ernest Poole: "Us kids ain't built fer de home and mudder racket; we won't stand fer it."

The nourishment of these restless little rovers is left to their own inclination: it is snatched anywhere and often consumed as they run. The greasy "sinker" and the dubious frankfurter are his chief reliance. Frequently in one night a boy drinks from five to six cups of coffee.

All these things of course antagonize the well-being of a growing boy. But the taste for gambling and filthy language are perhaps the most deplorable, the most ineradicable vices that clutch his soul. The chances of his day's work (for every day is uncertain) seem to set the key for his future.

Craps on the sidewalk, the policy-play (and the street boys always know where the lottery fortune beckons), the pool-room, the race-track—these are the fateful accompaniments of his career.

Luck is his slogan; accident is his opportunity. What wonder if inefficiency, vagrancy, mendicancy, or crime, is his end!

These poor little street gamins are wise to all the weaknesses of human nature, and they trade upon these vices and follies. Scott Nearing, a valiant champion of the ill-starred child, tells of his meeting some newsboys at two o'clock one Sunday morning; for the Sabbath morning is a big trade-time for the newsboy. Mr. Nearing came upon a group waiting for their supply of papers, and drew them into conversation. One of the boys began confidentially: "Two kids at Dempsey's won thirty-three dollars last Sunday." "Do you ever win?" asked Mr. Nearing. "Nit; I won three or four times, but lost about a thousand times. If you want to make money easy watch for drunks. Last Sat'day one of our kids see a lady what had been hitting it up some. She was scared to cross the street, and the kid he says, 'Let

me help ye'; and he grabs her arm with his and slips his right hand into her pocket, and out comes her pocketbook. She never knowed a thing about it."

In a certain reformatory it was found that newsboy crimes had been larceny, disorderly conduct, unlawful entry and burglary. At a newsboy home a search of pockets disclosed revolvers, razors, dark lanterns, skeleton keys, burglar's tools, flashy novels and cheap, vicious pictures.

Mr. Robert Hunter, in his book "Poverty," sweeping up child labor conditions in New York, says:

"Several hundred children, pursuing street occupations, were without question descending as fast as possible into the most degraded and dangerous class in the community. The temptations surrounding them in their work were fast making of them petty thieves, loafers, gamblers. They broke all home ties, refused to continue in school, and entered upon a street career which could end only in making them diseased, drunken and shiftless vagrants and mendicants."

Could there be a more infernal training for crime than this black-letter college of the

street? Could there be a surer training for disbelief in goodness and virtue? Sharp-witted is the newsboy truly; but his cunning is of the weasel, and his brightness is the phosphorescent shining of decay.

No Real Need for the Newsboy

Now, why the newsboys at all? If European cities can dispense with them, cannot we? The Salvation Army and the numberless old people's homes could supply us with a more efficient service, and thus spare the drain upon our charities, as well as help restore the self-respect of our elderly paupers who cry for work.

The need of money at home is the general plea of the boys, and there are a few cases where the plea is valid. But many boys are selling papers just to get spending money for shows and sweetmeats. They are a most improvident class, spending in an hour for treats or in a gambling game the earnings of days. But even if the plea of home-need were always true, why inflict an irremediable wrong upon the child to uphold his family?

One older boy, after years of newspaper work, had reached the final pinnacle of $7.50 a week. He tried in vain to get into a better paying place; but being, like all graduates of the street, untrained for any work and unable by capacity and inclination to hold any responsible position, he could find elsewhere nothing that paid him more than "two or three dollars a week." "Why," said the lad, "that is hardly enough for spending money."

But judging by the records obtained in careful study of newsboys, and their homes and aims, the newsboy often goes into his work through love of adventure, desire of pocket money, or because of the cupidity and stupidity of his parents. The needy mother at the washtub, who is often in our thought when we see this young vender, is frequently a myth of the Betsy Harris sisterhood.

Out of one thousand newsboys listed in Chicago, 803 had both parents living; 74 per cent. had fathers; 97 per cent. had mothers. In Cincinnati, out of 1,752 children, it was found that 1,432 had both parents living. A special inquiry in that city showed

that in only 363 cases were the earnings of these children absolutely needed.

The Child Labor Committee in 1907, having investigated the homes of several hundred newsboys of New York, makes this report: "In the majority of cases parents are not dependent on the boys' earnings. That boys must sell papers to help widowed mothers or disabled fathers, is for the most part a gross exaggeration."

However, there are homes that are hard-pressed by the wolf; and the parent may feel forced at times to send his children out into the bread-struggle, hoping to snatch up a few additional dollars for the needs of the daily battle, not thinking perhaps that the work will leave them maimed or stunted for all the years to come. Dr. James A. Britton of Chicago, condemning juvenile street-trades, says:

"The average newsboy, if he works 365 days in a year, does not earn over a hundred dollars; if he becomes delinquent it costs the State at least two hundred dollars a year to care for him. When we remember that twelve out of every one hundred boys between ten and sixteen become delinquent,

and that over 60 per cent. of these boys come from street trades, it does not take long for a business man to figure out that it is rather poor economy to let a ten-year-old-boy go into this field of labor. * * * From an economic standpoint the family that sends out a ten-year-old boy to sell papers loses a great deal more in actual money from the boy's lack of future earning capacity than the boy can possible earn by his youthful efforts. In other words, this sort of labor from an economic standpoint is an absurdity."

Several expert statisticians estimate that we have in our America 10,000,000 persons who are underfed and insufficiently clothed from year's end to year's end. They are so crushed in the jam of the competitive struggle that they cannot make their way to any safe ground where they can live a satisfactory life. We must keep this fact steadily in mind in all our criticism of the parents who push their children into the labor hells.

We are also told by careful experts that $950 a year (about $3 a working day) is the lowest sum on which efficiency may be maintained in a family consisting of a man and

woman and three children. Investigation shows that three-fourths of the families of New England, New York and the neighboring States receive a yearly wage that cannot provide the necessaries and decencies of existence.

But whatever the need of the family, its cannibalistic living on the child should never be permitted by society: ethics and economics cry out against the sacrifice.

The "Shine 'Em Up" Boys

Mr. William Dean Howells announces somewhere that every man should blacken his own boots, that no one ought to ask another to do so menial a service for him. Now, I do not know what planetary influence or what human proclamation has ordained that blacking of boots and shoes should be so important as to pillory hundreds of thousands of boys every day all over the land. And I declare that boot-blacking is an abomination to the boys, who give to it the inestimable years of their youth, the unreturning chances of their education, and the priceless boon of their health and

strength. And if we were as sensitive to the odors of good and evil as Swedenborg says the angels are, then the spiritual stench of this abomination would go up daily as a black malodorous cloud.

The Greeks have now the monopoly of this shoe-blacking business, their systematic exploitation of children having driven out most of the Italian and Negro competition. The padrone, the ubiquitous foreign-born boss, imports these boys from Greece, contracting for them as if they were machines, and treating them like herds of animals.

The New York-New Jersey Committee of the North American Civic League for Immigrants reports these facts:

"The condition of Greek boys and young men in such occupations as push-cart peddling, shoe-shining parlors and the flower trade is one of servitude and peonage. It has been found that many boys apparently from fourteen to eighteen years of age arrive here alone, stating that they are eighteen years old, and that they are going to relatives.

"They have been found working in the shoe-shining parlors seven days a week from

7 A.M. to 9 P.M., and living with the 'boss' in groups varying from five to twenty-five under unsanitary conditions, overcrowding and irregularity of meals wholly undesirable for young boys. They are isolated from learning English or from American contact, and receive for their work from $7 to $15 a month and board and lodging. The majority of the flower peddlers have been unable to obtain permits, with the result that the boys who work for them are arrested for violating the law. Boys who have been in the country from three months to a year state that they have been arrested several times—their first experience in this country—and are already hardened so that they think nothing of paying fines." *

These young bootblacks live in filthy quarters. Several beds are sometimes wedged into a single room, four boys sleeping in each bed. In other rooms the boys merely roll themselves up in blankets and stretch out on the floors.

The bootblack stands are usually opened

* See the Committee's Report for December, 1909, and March, 1911. See also Immigration Commission's Report on the Greek Padrone System in the United States, for 1911.

at six o'clock in the morning; in consequence the boys are obliged to rise about five o'clock; and when they have a long way to go to reach the work, they have to turn out as early as half-past four. The boys remain working till nine-thirty or ten at night in cities, and on Saturdays and Sundays they stick to the job till a still later hour. The boys usually eat their luncheons in the establishment or in some cubby-hole nearby: bread and olives and cheese form the usual bill of fare. After reaching their "home," they eat their supper and usually roll up for the night without removing their clothes. In this dull soul-wasting round of drudgery, each boy must find time to wash at intervals the dirty rags he uses in polishing shoes. I fear me that shirt-washing is nearly always forgotten in this zeal for the shoe-rag.

"The Glory That Was Greece"

Vacation for the boy has no place in the scheme of the padrone, who is the evil genius of these young workers from the violet vales of Greece. Here is an army of little wage slaves. What a grim procession to descend

out of "the glory that was Greece"!—Greece that gave us in the days of old a bright array of poetic imaginations—Greece whose high achievements have been the joy of the centuries—Greece that gave us the marble breed of the Parthenon and the laughing young gods of Parnassus!

No, there is no vacation for bootblack boys: they are continually under the watch of the padrone. Traveling the ferry-boats, you see this pontifical personage strutting about on his sleepless rounds, the boys cringing under his glance as under the lash of a whip.

The majority of these youngsters can neither read nor write their own language; and owing to their long hours, they cannot go to our night-schools. Their mental development is wholly arrested: they have no thought in their lives: they are forced into the herds of the dumb driven cattle. Not for them the kindling touch of good advice, the flash of moral inspiration, the inshining of the dream.

Besides this, their bodies are worn out by the physical fatigue in the long drudgery, without rest, without recreation. The rav-

ages on the health and constitution of these boys are appalling. What else could we expect from their long hours, their close confinement in poorly ventilated places, their unsanitary "home" conditions, their excessive stooping to carry on their work, their inadequate nourishment due to the economy of the padrone who furnishes the food, their inhalation of injurious chemicals in the polish they use, and the inhalation of microbe-laden dust from shoes smirched with the dirt of the street. Add to all these ills the filthy condition of their bodies resulting from failure to bathe and from the lack of proper clothing. No one can deny that in this useless trade we have one of the cancers eating at the body of the nation.

The Greek consul at Chicago, a physician, in a letter to the Immigration Inspector, dated Nov. 16, 1910, declares that his experience in examining and treating bootblacks, convinces him that all boys under eighteen who work for a few years in shoeshining establishments develop serious stomach and liver disease, and the majority of them contract tuberculosis. He is of the opinion that it would be more humane for

young Greeks to be denied admission to America than to be allowed to land and work under this rank peonage of the padrone.

The Bureau of Immigration has tried to break up this padrone system by appealing to the courts. This has caused the padrone to be more careful: he now brings the boys into the country under the cover of their relatives in Greece. He resorts at times to underground methods that have some of the color of the five-cent detective series.

The padrone squeezes out of each boy varying sums of income, ranging from one hundred to five hundred dollars a year; while the boy receives a sum in wages ranging from eighty to two hundred and fifty dollars a year. The tip you are moved to give to these dark-eyed, nimble-fingered lads, does not enrich them; for the paunchy padrone has it nominated in his bond that all tips are to go into his pocket. Under ordinary circumstances a boy's tips are fifty cents a day, and often in large cities and upon gala days, they run higher. Sometimes the tips are sufficient to pay the boy's full wages, leaving the padrone the full profit of the boy's drudgery.

The Immigration Laws exclude from the country boys under sixteen if unaccompanied by their parents, one or both; or if their parents are not already here. But the specious advertising of the padrones all through Greece calls out an annual host of boys, who, if necessary, pose as the sons of certain immigrants on board with them. And, once on land, the padrone juggles his victims out of sight, they finding too late the trap that has snared them in our free America. Here is the way a homesick Greek in Syracuse, New York, put his own case as printed in a Syracuse paper:

"Before I came to this country from Greece, I heard that this country is free, but I don't think so. It is free for the Americans, not for the shoe-shiners. In this city are too many shoe-shiners' stands, and the boys which work there—they work fifteen hours a day, and Sunday, and almost eighteen on Saturdays. They make only from $12 to $18 a month and board; but we don't have any good board neither, but our patrons [padrones] give us bread, tea and a piece of cheese for dinner, supper, but no breakfast. We don't have any time to go to

the church, nor to school, and without them we won't be good citizens. They won't let us read newspapers because they are afraid if we learn something we will quit; but we can't quit because we can't speak English, and we can't find another job. Now, I don't mean the boys working in the barber shops. They make $10 to $18 a week, and they don't work as hard as we do. We wish to work as they do. We want the public and Mr. Mayor to cut the hours from fifteen to ten, not Sundays, because we want time for school, and weekly work, not monthly. I think I wrote enough."

Little Drudges in Other Lines

The padrones also have Greek and Italian boys selling and delivering flowers from the shops, also selling on the streets the flowers that are getting too old for the shops. Again, the boys peddle candy, fruit and vegetables. They sleep in the same rooms that are used to store their wares. Bananas ripen well, we are told, in the heat of a warm bedroom. Fortunately banana skins are thick, and we hope impervious. Chewing gum is a com-

modity which is peddled on the streets by children; although the slot machines have captured some of this commerce.

Italian children, and sometimes the Greek, are assistants in our numberless fruit stands, for which we may thank these nations of Southern Europe. Some of these fruit-merchants are well-to-do; nevertheless, the child is not spared to play or to study unless the law reaches an arm to rescue him from the clutch of Mammon.

German children toil in our market gardens, weeding, transplanting, picking: there is no rest for anyone while the season is on. Often these early-rising, late-quitting little workers fall asleep in school.

Henry Pratt Fairchild, in his book "Immigration," rehearsing the privations of some of these immigrants, now doing our hardest and poorest paid work, gives us a view of their cheerless surroundings. It is from such homes that most of our street-traffickers come:

"For the bulk of the ordinary immigrants, the economic and other advantages of America are offset by terrible hardships and losses. As one thinks of the broken and separated

families, often never reunited; of the depressing, and degrading group-life of men in this country; of religious ideals shattered and new vices acquired in the unwonted and untempered atmosphere of American liberty; of the frequent industrial accidents and unceasing overstrain in mine and factory, upon which they reckon as one of the concomitants of life in America, and which sends them back to Europe in a few years, broken and prematurely aged, but with an accumulation of dollars; of the tuberculosis contracted by Italians in the confined life to which they are unaccustomed, and by Greek bootblacks in their squalid quarters and their long day's labors; of the sad conditions of labor in the sweat-shops and tenement workrooms; of the child labor in the cranberry bogs of Massachusetts and New Jersey; of the destruction of family life by the taking of boarders, and the heart-breaking toil of the boarding-boss's wife; of the unremitting toil and scant recreation; of the low wages and insufficient standard of living; of the unsparing and niggardly thrift by which the savings are made possible—as one thinks of these things, which are all too common to be con-

sidered exceptional, and compares them with the conditions which characterize peasant life in Europe, where many æsthetic and neighborly circumstances tend to offset the poverty, one cannot help wondering how large a proportion of our immigrants finally reap a net gain in the things that are really worth while."

Tragedy in the Messenger Boy's Life

But of all street-workers it is the messenger boy who most of all deserves our aid and sympathy. Delivering day telegrams is not all the work a messenger boy does. His best paying work is in the dead of night, when evil stalks abroad. The telephone can summon him to any den of sin in the city. He is called to go on errands to buy drinks and drugs for depraved women, to get medicines, to carry meals, even to tidy up rooms, and to pilot visitors to unnamable houses.

The more winning and alert the boy, the surer he is to be a favorite in these houses of abomination, the surer to absorb all the evil in his surroundings.

Is it not a grotesque civilization which

sends missionaries across the sea to save the souls of the heathen, and yet permits conditions at home *that debauch the children at our very doors?* Indeed, can we call it a civilization, this social order that sleeps on while these enormities exist? Above all, can we call it "a Christian civilization"?

Like all the other street trades, this messenger service has no promotions. It fits a boy for nothing but infamy. Its graduates fill the children's courts and the reformatories. Boys with nimble wits and fingers become expert in thievery, in petty overcharges, in graft. They become familiar with the getting and using of deadly drugs like opium and cocaine, drugs which they carry to whites, Chinese and negroes. Curiosity often tempts them to a trial, and then the descent is swift.

Indeed, the messenger boy, who must be of a certain mental alertness and competence to begin with, is taken at his most curious, his most investigating age and forced into the most evil resorts of our cities, where he must lose his innocence of mind, and too often his purity and potency of body.

Dr. Edward N. Clopper, in his excellent

book "Child Labor in City Streets," collects some appalling facts. Speaking of the messenger service, he says:

"Accustomed to seeing messenger boys engaged during the day in the unobjectionable task of delivering telegrams to residences and business offices, one is likely to regard this service as an occupation quite suitable for children, and to give it no further thought. However, the character of the work done by the messenger boy changes radically after nine or ten o'clock at night. At that hour most legitimate business has ceased, and the evil phases begin to manifest themselves. From that time on until nearly dawn the messenger's work is largely in connection with the vicious features of city life.

"The ignorance of the general public as to the evil influences surrounding the night-messenger service is strikingly illustrated by what one Indiana boy told an investigator: he declared that if his father knew what kind of work he was doing, a strap would be laid across his back, and he would be compelled to abandon it. But the father did not know; he thought his boy was simply delivering telegrams.

"The delivery of telegrams forms but a small part of the boy's work at night, because few messages are dispatched after business hours. Instead, calls are sent to the office for messengers to go on errands. The boys wait upon the characters of the underworld, and perform a surprising variety of simple tasks—they carry notes to and from the inmates of houses of prostitution and their patrons, take lunches, chop suey and chile concarne to bawdyhouse women, procure liquor after the closing hour, purchase opium, cocaine and other drugs, go to drug stores for prostitutes to get medicines and articles used in their trade, and perform other tasks that oblige them to cultivate acquaintance with the worst side of human nature.

"The uniform or cap of the messenger boy is a badge of secrecy, and enables him to get liquor at illegal hours, or to procure opium and other drugs, where plain citizens would be refused. Hence these boys are thrown into associations of the lowest kind, night after night, and come to regard these evil conditions as normal phases of life. Usually the brightest boys on the night force become the favorites of the prostitutes; the

women take a fancy to particular boys because of their personal attractiveness and show them many favors, so that the most promising boys in this work are the ones most liable to suffer complete moral degradation.

"Messenger service not only gives boys the opportunity to learn what life is at night in 'tenderloin' districts; but the character of the work actually *forces* them into contact with the vilest conditions and subjects them to the fearful influences always exerted by such associations. Some believe that this evil could be prevented by forbidding the office to allow messenger boys to go on such errands. But this is not practicable for two resons: first, because an essential feature of the messenger service is secrecy —the office does not inquire into the nature of the errand to be performd; and even if it did so, a false statement could easily be made by the patron over the telephone; and, second, it would be necessary to send a detective along with the boy on each trip to see that he observed the rules. Boys are eager to run errands for prostitutes for various reasons, one being the extra income

assured, as these women give tips with liberal hand.

"Like other street occupations, the messenger service is a blind alley: it leads nowhere. A very few boys are promoted to the position of check boy in the telegraph office; and fewer still have an opportunity to learn telegraphy. Some of the boys become cab-drivers because they have familiarized themselves with the city streets; others become saloonkeepers because they have become well acquainted with this method of making a livelihood. Some are attracted by the life of 'ease' and enter into a gross agreement with prostitutes, upon whose earnings they subsist; others have the courage to get away from these hideous influences and secure work as office boys or in other lines.

"A considerable number of the inmates of State reform schools were formerly messenger boys, indicating that this service is one of the roads to delinquency. As the immoral influences surrounding this work are especially active among youths, the age limit for such employment at night should be made high enough to prevent their being so exposed. New York State was the first to

declare that if this work is to be done at night, it must be done by men, and has fixed the age limit at twenty-one years."

Summary and Conclusion

Now, as a rule, this host of little street-workers may not be looked on as apprentices making preparation for their life work. The grocer's errand boy will be discharged when he gets bigger and demands higher wages; the apothecary's runner is not in training to become an apothecary; the little bundle carrier is not in training to become a merchant or a tailor.

Efficiency is a word that is now echoing around the industrial world. The gaining of a fraction of a second in the time of laying two bricks is a feat that all are praising. Economic waste is being stopped in every bunghole.

But the waste of human life and human energy goes blithely on. There is a hideous squandering of energy in our soldiery, the uniformed unemployed armies of the world. There is also a hideous squandering of energy in the ununiformed unemployed armies of workers who

drift upon our streets, or crowd into our churches crying for bread.

With all these labor resources to draw upon, what reason have we for wasting the precious energy of the children, sucking the marrow out of their bones, in the mills and mines and fields and streets? A parent should no more devour the health and strength of his child than a hen should devour her own eggs. We let the energies of grown men go to waste like water in a sink-hole. We sweep the children into the labor market, blasting their sacred energies, and blighting the generation that is to come. Could any social situation be more illogical, more inhuman, more insane?

We deplore the illiterate immigrants coming to our shores, but the last census tells us that more than one in ten of our native white Americans cannot read their own ballots. The National Child Labor Committee shows us that ten years ago nearly one-third of our native white American boys were found working in those seven states that lead the country to-day in illiteracy of native whites. Is this not a deadly parallel to chalk up beside the proud statistics of Big

Business in those states? Homer Folks, commissioner of charities, says:

"It is never wise to drive a hard bargain with children. I have no doubt, if we could go through the almshouses and other institutions we should be able to trace the after-effects of child labor. If we could go back far enough in the history of the sick and infirm in our charitable institutions, I do not doubt that we should find that the weakening of constitutions which made the person a victim of disease, or that made him a victim of the temptation that produced in him an early decay of his faculties so that he became incompetent to care for his family—dates back to the years when nature was still doing her work of upbuilding but was interfered with by a routine of hard labor which only the resources of a fully matured body could meet."

Thousands of these working boys drift into the lawless and criminal classes. Here are straws that show the direction of the wind. An investigation at a truant school in Buffalo, New York, revealed the fact that 46 per cent. of the inmates had been engaged in street activities. The Catholic Protectorate

of New York (mostly Italians who run the street trades) finds that 80 per cent. of their boys have been street workers. The House of Refuge finds that 63 per cent. of its boys were street traders.

But more terrible than the illiteracy and vagrancy of these poor street business boys is the degeneracy in morals, the bankruptcy in health. Says Mr. John Spargo in "The Bitter Cry of the Children":

"Nor is it only in factories that these grosser forms of immorality flourish. They are even more prevalent among the children of the street trades—newsboys, bootblacks, messengers and the like. The proportion of newsboys who suffer from venereal diseases is alarmingly great. The superintendent of the John Worthy School of Chicago, Mr. Sloan, asserts that 'one-third of all the newsboys who come to the John Worthy School have venereal diseases and that ten per cent. of the remaining newsboys at present in the Bridewell are, according to the physician's diagnosis, suffering from similar diseases.'

"The newsboys who come to the school are, according to Mr. Sloan, on an average of one-third below the ordinary standard of

physical development, a condition which will be readily understood by those who know the ways of the newsboys of our great cities—their irregular habits, scant feeding, sexual excesses, secret vices, sleeping in hallways, basements, stables and quiet corners."

Street trading in the case of girls has been stopped in New York City, a city as mad in the pursuit of business as any city on the planet. In Great Britain, the Departmental Committee of 1910 calls for the prohibition of street trading by boys under 17 and girls under 18. If the girls can thus be sheltered in Manhattan and commerce still go on, why cannot the boys also be saved?

Municipal or State control should step in to shield the future citizens being damaged as ruthlessly as if incarcerated or mutilated by some foreign power. In case of foreign assaults on the grown citizens of a country, the nation flies to arms. The need is even greater in the case of the child: the helplessness of the victim is more abject, the call for aid is more urgent.*

* Any one who will help, or who wishes further details, may communicate with The National Child Labor Bureau, 105 East 22d Street, New York City. Or with The International Child Welfare League, 23 West 44th Street, New York City.

XII

WHY DO CHILDREN TOIL?

NEITHER beasts of the field nor birds of the forest impose the burdens of existence upon their young. Only man lives upon his offspring. Why is it? Particularly with reference to the United States does the question carry passion and insistence. We are under a government of, by, and for the people; countless spires lift to the sky in mute token of our allegiance to the Gentlest Soul in all human record; yet it is upon the breaking backs of nearly two million wretched little wage-earners that we achieve much of the material progress that is our boast.

Why is it? Is civilization, after all, no more than a veneer for the selfsame instincts that dominated us in the days when we ran on all fours? Have we, out of our devotion to the competitive theory, evolved a Frankenstein to devour us? Is Christ no more than a salve to soothe us on the seventh day for

the sins of the six? Are we to realize that parental love is no vital, elemental thing, but a habit that disappears under compulsion?

To find the answer to these questions, to get at the cause of the child-labor evil, is not a simple matter by any means, for all scientific inquiry into the problem has been complicated by the personal equation.

The economist argues from wage schedules, the trades-unionist from lack of organization, the socialist from the ferocities of competition, the politician from unwise and unjust laws, the preacher from godlessness, and the educationalist from a faulty school system that exalts books above life. Each insists upon his own point of view, and the amount of give and take is relatively small.

May this, in fact, not be the explanation for our lack of progress toward ascertainment of cause? Is it not possible that the answer does not lie in one but in *all,* and that the evil does not spring from a tap-root but from a vast and intricate spread of roots? Or is it not better visualized as a disease of the blood rather than a break in the bone?

Involuntary poverty, for instance, is assigned by many as the fundamental cause of

child labor. There can be no question that we are face to face with a condition of existence in which countless thousands of the very poor are not poor by their own fault or lack of merit and industry. Not a city in the land but has its periods of disemployment, when men and women walk the streets, eating their hearts out in a passion for work.

It is also unquestionable that poverty drives many a child into the factory. In this day of the high cost of living it has been stated and accepted that $900 a year is necessary for the proper maintenance of a family of five, yet we know that the average income is far below this standard.

In an investigation made by the United States Census Bureau in 1905, covering 3,297,819 wage earners, the average weekly earnings of all classes was found to be $10.06 or $523.12 a year. For men above sixteen years the average was $11.16; for women $6.17, and for children under sixteen, $3.46. Out of the total number of men included in the statistics, 1,215,798, or 46 per cent., earned $10 or less a week.

Yet who will put an authoritative finger upon the exact cause of involuntary poverty?

When we say that it is due to the allowance of special privileges to the few at the expense of the common rights of the many, we have said everything yet explained nothing. Our whole system of government — executive, legislative, and judicial—is attacked, for our government evils do not proceed from one branch alone, but from the collusion of law-makers, law-interpreters, and law-administrators.

At the very outset, then, by accepting involuntary poverty as a fundamental cause of child labor—and accept it we must—we are forced to admit that child labor itself is not a separated evil, and that to fight it successfully we must fight every other evil as well.

There are many, however, who dispute the theory of involuntary poverty, and it cannot be denied that they present some rather perplexing figures. To quote from a recent pamphlet issued by the National Child Labor Committee: "The present need of poor families, rather than the future needs of their children, is so often invoked as an excuse for home work that it is of special interest to note that among 521 families visited only 12 per cent. had widowed, separated, or deserted

mothers; only 2 per cent. had invalid fathers; and only 1 per cent. had incapacitated fathers. Four per cent. of the widows had no children under 16."

The government investigation into one trade among home workers—finishing men's ready-made clothing—would seem to confirm this finding that the poor widow with her family to support is not a factor. "If she were," declares the report, "her children would starve, as the remuneration for this class of labor falls far short of supporting the most diligent and tireless worker. . . . It is hard sometimes to determine the extent to which thrift and not actual want is the real cause for working."

Another investigation (also conducted by the government) into reasons "Why Children Leave School to Go to Work," shows that only 17 per cent. had a father dead, and that the second largest class left school because the help of the little ones "was desired by the family, though not necessary." Yet how, in the name of fairness, can this be accepted as a refutation of the theory of involuntary poverty as a cause of child labor? Are we to believe that these fathers and mothers are lost

to all natural impulses, and that they exploit their offspring out of sheer greed and rapacity?

How much better and more true to realize that this class are the victims of the fear of tomorrow; that they are so close to the line that divides bare livelihood and sheer starvation that a certain stark terror never leaves their souls! The howl of the wolf is ever in their ears; a sick spell or a period of disemployment will let him in the door, and it is to guard against this that they hurl their children into the widening breach. Until this fear is lifted, until the parents are able to realize that it is not necessary for every member of the family to work in order to prevent future starvation, we must place the chief blame upon society.

When we put the individual worker to one side for a moment, and take up the employer and the employing interests, it may seem for a while that we have stumbled upon a cause of child labor that has nothing to do with involuntary poverty and with the fear of existence that is in the hearts of all those who dwell along its borderline.

So eminent an authority as Edwin W. De

Leon, high official of a casualty company, is on record as saying that: "The origin of child labor grew out of the sordid desires of employers to secure labor at the lowest possible cost, regardless of the law of nature or the law of man, and the same selfish considerations will serve to exterminate child labor when it is no longer profitable to use it." This grim statement needs no comment.

Mark, too, the bitter words of John N. Golden, head of a great and powerful union: "Child labor is employed simply because it is cheap and unresisting. There is never any danger of the child workers organizing, either among themselves or as a trades union, for the purpose of securing better conditions or a higher wage. There are many occupations in a textile factory wherein it is cheaper to have two children working for three dollars or less per week than to employ one full grown man or woman at a decent wage."

It must also be admitted that there are abundant facts to support this contention that the ruthless greed of the employer—the dominancy of his own selfish interests—is at the bottom of the child labor evil. In the cotton-mill districts of the South it is a com-

Photo from National Child Labor Committee

WORKERS OUTSIDE A COTTON MILL IN THE SOUTH

mon thing to find many mothers in poor circumstances hiding their children from the mill officials.

"If they find you've got a boy or girl that ain't working," exclaimed one poor soul, "they keep at you an' at you until they gits it."

A sliding rent scale, taken from one cotton-mill village, will show one form of compulsion that is exercised by mill officials to get children into the spinning rooms:

Old and new houses, with only 1 hand at work, per room per month	$1.25
New houses, 2 hands at work, per room per month	.80
Old houses, 2 hands at work, per room per month	.60
New houses, 3 or more hands at work, per room per month	.75
Old houses, 3 or more hands at work, per room per month	.50

(See Volume VII of Senate Document 645.)

And yet is there not something horrible in the assumption that the employing class is made up of men in whom the decent, kindly impulses have atrophied? That they are en-

slaving little children—minting the very sweat of almost babes—out of no finer motive than brutal avarice?

Is it, instead, not a fact that the average employer is as much of a victim of conditions as the child in his factory or store? A business can go to smash as well as a family, and the savageries of competition operate no less in the broad field of commercialism than in the basements of individual industry.

Our laws, quite frankly, exalt property rights above human rights; and while they work inexorably to the involuntary poverty of the many on that account, they also work just as inexorably to compel the few into ways of cruelty. For, mark you, unless he who *is* privileged takes advantage of his privilege he will soon find himself outside the privileged class.

If this train of reason is accepted, then it will be seen that the greed of the employing interests is not a thing apart, something to be dealt with separately, but is drawn from the same well whence comes involuntary poverty and the fear of tomorrow.

The employer's ignorance of economic values is also put forward as a cause of child

labor, and plausible indeed are the contentions of the advocates. Charles F. Smith, president of a Connecticut factory, makes an able presentation of the assertion. "It is my belief," he says, "that the reasons many employers of labor hire, when they can, boys fourteen years old and younger, is because they have not investigated carefully the relative economy of the boy of fourteen and his older brother. . . . Many manufacturers who, as a result of careful experiment and study, know exactly the relative economies of different kinds of engines, boilers, machines, materials, and processes, take it for granted, apparently without experiment, that the boy of fourteen must be more profitable than the boy of sixteen because his wages are less. This is one of the curious things in my manufacturing experience—to see how much study is given to the machine and how little to the man. The inanimate things that go into a manufactured product are scientifically analyzed and compared; but science usually stops when it comes to the animate things, the human element; and whether this grade of labor at one price, or that grade at another, can be more profitably used is a ques-

tion that is not decided by her accurate methods."

Mr. Smith, as an experiment, discontinued the employment of the 400 children that were among his 2,000 employes. While the original action, it may be mentioned, was prompted by sentiment, the policy was continued as "good business". He found that while he had to pay more wages to the boy of sixteen he did a little more work than the one of fourteen; did it a little better; was better able to take care of himself; a little less likely to cause accidents to others, to himself, or to his tools; that he knew two years more than the boy of fourteen, and was, on the whole, a much better investment.

He discovered also that the policy had quite a beneficial influence upon his working force by creating a much kindlier feeling toward the management—something that can be more definitely understood when it is learned that the adult worker generally refers to the wages paid little children as "blood money".

Mr. Smith is not alone in demonstrating the success of such an experiment. Others like him have discontinued child labor, and have found that the first increase in the cost

of doing business was offset by many compensations—betterment of the moral and physical health of the workers, the increased power of consumption that always comes with an increased wage, and a better class of artisans as a result of the two extra years available for educational purposes.

In a larger way, too, the experiment has been made successfully. In 1904, when the National Child Labor Committee commenced its fight against the employment of boys under sixteen in the glass industry, a cry went up that such legislation would cripple the business, work hardship to poor families, and prevent boys from learning the trade.

As a consequence, only Ohio and Illinois yielded, passing eight-hour laws and forbidding the working of children under sixteen at night. Pennsylvania and Indiana adopted ineffective laws, and West Virginia did nothing at all. Here, then, was a fair test by comparison, and mark how practice smashed theories.

Not a single glass plant left Ohio or Illinois, but eight moved into these two states from the other three, and many new plants

were started. Few complaints of distress were registered from Ohio and Illinois points, but the glass-factory towns of Pennsylvania and West Virginia were scenes of bitter destitution. In order to get boys to work, whole families were imported; and when the parents failed of employment, the entire burden of support fell upon the frail and inadequate shoulders of the boy in the factory.

Of a certainty, the average employer's ignorance of economic values must be admitted, but the admission carries with it a host of extenuating circumstances. Must it not be asked whether the employer alone is to blame for his ignorance? Caught up in the competitive grind as he is—the victim of influences no less powerful than those that make for the terror and the struggle of his workers—what compulsion of public sentiment is brought to bear upon him to make him open his eyes?

Do we not live in a democracy? To be sure, a system of checks and balances has hampered and obscured the sovereignty of the people in large measure; yet the fact still remains that if a sufficient wave of popular revolt is accumulated, it can dash down all the barriers

THE NATION COULD HAVE NO BETTER "BIRTH OF FREEDOM" THAN TO TURN EVERY MILL-CHILD LOOSE TO RUN ON THE HILLS AND PLAY

that craft, corruption, and conservatism may erect. Let the people—the whole people—become aroused to the true horror of child labor, and child labor will vanish from the face of the continent.

Why have the people never been aroused? Because they have never become interested. This lack of interest is accounted for by the claim that we are in the grip of a very madness of materialism, the money-making mania, and that the industrial spirit dominates us to the exclusion of all else.

So we are, but again comes that "why?" Surely the slightest inquiry will show that the people themselves are the victims of conditions no less than the employers and the children. Trace back our laws to the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia itself, and it will be seen that our whole system of government is based on a worship of property rather than on a decent regard for humanity.

We shrink in horror from nineteenth century England's execution of a wretched girl for *attempting* to steal a sack with which to cover her new-born babe; yet nineteenth century America imprisoned thousands for debt, and twentieth century America devotes the

best thought and talent of its people to money rather than to manhood.

In 1837, an English butcher named Fowler ordered his servant, Priestley, to ride upon a van filled with meats for delivery. Priestley pointed out the overloaded condition of the van, and when, as he feared, the van broke down and crushed his leg, he sued. A certain Lord Abinger, before whom the case was tried, came to the rescue of Property with a decision that held that Priestley's injury was not due to Fowler, the master, but to the fellow servant who was *driving* the van.

In 1841 this "precedent" was tried out very successfully in this country, and, as a consequence, the "fellow servant" theory has been with us ever since, annually cheating thousands of workmen and widows and orphans out of proper damages. Upon this pleasing theory has also been grafted the doctrine of "assumed risk," an ingenious process of reasoning by which it is held that a "servant" may quit his job if he considers it hazardous; but if he keeps it, and is killed by assuming the hazard, then the employer is not liable because it was the privilege of the

"servant" to give up his position in advance of the accident.

Always property! Never humanity! Is it any wonder that out of such a system, breathing such an atmosphere, our spirituality has atrophied and that our imaginations have been developed along the line of industry and commerce? Is the employer to blame for his rapacity and refusal to consider the man as well as the machine when his nation deifies that machine?

Where is the church? Well may the question be asked, for it is into the keeping of the church that we, as a people, have consigned our spirituality and our emotionalism. With what faith has it met faith? In dwindled congregations, in the "growing godlessness" that is bewailed in frantic efforts, like the Men and Religions Forward Movement, we may read the answer.

Christ has been taken out of the market place and confined in the cloister. He has been given pallor and remoteness until it is difficult to remember that He was a carpenter and went to death out of his flaming belief in human rights, in love, in justice, and in fraternity. The gown-men

have made a peep-show out of Him, and the patronage has fallen off. Betrayed and deserted by the custodians of the spirit, is it any great marvel that we have put sole emphasis upon the flesh and the things of this earth? Is it any wonder that we have made money getting the all-important object?

Splendid men in the religious organization are conducting a splendid fight to bring the church back to the people, to set it again on the path of its historic mission, but it may not yet be said that the heroic effort will succeed.

Nor may the school, our great institution for the conservation of the spirit, escape reproach and bitter arraignment. And here again, as we take up the consideration of our educational system, it may seem that we are grappling with a cause of child labor that stands separate and distinct from the others.

There can be no denial that the school is a principal contributing factor to the child labor evil. Not an investigator nor a factory inspector but tells the same story of children who prefer the factory to the school and is insistent that the American child is not in harmony with the present school environment.

Professor Nearing, of the University of

Pennsylvania, declares that "The school fails to hold the interest and attention of the average boy because the school training has so little relation to the world in which the average men and women are called upon to live. . . . Thus the school system, with its defective curriculum, its imperfect, overworked machinery, its young, inexperienced teachers, and its repressive discipline, forms in the aggregate an ogre from which the child shrinks in terror and in whose place he accepts thankfully the burdens and the soul-destroying monotony of factory work."

Dr. Woods Hutchinson gives it as his unwilling judgment that while the factory may become a sweat-shop, the average school in the United States today is little better than a mental treadmill for the average boy of the working classes after twelve years of age, because "the education is so purely formal, so bookish, so ladylike, so irrational and impractical; in a word, that it stunts his mind, bewilders his senses, and fills him with a dislike for real education and training. . . . What the boy wants is not books but *life,* not words but *things.* . . . In short, the conclusion, strange as it may seem to many, is al-

most inevitable that if we rationalize and modernize the curriculum of our public schools, we should cut the foundation from under one-half if not two-thirds of the child labor tendency. In fine, our most intelligent teachers, our most thoughtful students of pedagogy, our physicians, our sanitarians, our child labor students, have united for years in declaring that the most vital, the most crying demand before the American commonwealth today is to make our public schools *educate the whole child,* and not merely the expanded bulb at the upper end of him. Train him physically and emotionally as well as mentally. Substitute the playground, the garden, the shop, for the school book. Fit him for life and for action instead of for contemplation and culture; for service instead of superiority; for work, not for display."

Our schools, in the great cities, are overcrowded to an extent that forbids anything like individual attention. Slow pupils are herded along with quick children, and the penalty for dullness is an open humiliation that burns the child like an acid. Eye and ear trouble, adenoids—all those ailments that retard—are frequently overlooked, and de-

fectives and dullards alike suffer from the shame that attaches to "stupidity". (For a fuller discussion see pp. 372-388.)

Yet even were the schools not overcrowded, even were clinics operated in connection with every school, what would be our gain? We have invested millions in buildings and only hundreds in men and women. The poor pay of teachers is an American scandal. These workers, who exercise an influence over the young that is equal to that of parents, are victims of a wage scale far below that of the plumber, the mason, or the dog-catcher.

A certain fixed standard of living, calling for an income far in excess of the salaries paid, is demanded of teachers, so that for the majority it is a constant struggle to make both ends meet. Thus, in a business that demands sweetness, sympathy, and single-mindedness, we see the problem of existence entailing asperities, irritations, and resentments. Even if these conditions were remedied, there would still loom—a frowning barrier in the way of advancement—the curriculum itself.

Why is it, when practically all thinking people are agreed upon this statement of

evils connected with our public school system, that we do not resort to the regenerating process of revolution? What stands in the way of our picking up this rag-bag of outworn ideas and musty traditions, and shaking it to pieces? In search of the answer we come upon proof that the school, as a child labor factor, is *not* separated from the other causes at all, but is inextricably linked with the problems of involuntary poverty, fear of existence, employers' greed, oligarchic laws, a bloodless church, and a commercialized public sentiment.

A vitalized school, a curriculum devoted to the development of emotionalism, spirituality, and a quiveringly intelligent citizenship, would mean a vitalized church, a vitalized society, and a blazing determination of the sovereign people to eliminate every injustice, every inequality that now blocks the forward march of love and fraternity.

Our "invisible government" will not have it so. The oligarchy that has fastened its clutch upon our free institutions forbids. The fight of Special Privilege to retain its tariffs and its monopolies, its corrupt control of councils, legislatures, and courts, to drive

back the rushing waves of an increasing progressivist sentiment, has also, as one of its features, the continuance of the public school system in the slough of futility where it now lies.

Mark the bitterness of antagonism to even so simple a proposition as the use of the public school buildings at night as "social centres." Not a single community has been able to obtain this wider and more splendid use of the public school plant without bucking the resistance of Special Privilege.

It is not so much that our masters are opposed to a reform that will give the poor some other place to go than the street, the dive, the dance-hall, and the saloon, for they are not yet so mean as that. What they fear, what they mean to prevent if they can, is the gathering of people *together;* for such gatherings inevitably tend to the discussion of rights and wrongs, the nucleation of public sentiment, and the speedy assertion by the masses of their strength.

May it not be agreed, then, in the final summing up, that child labor is not an isolated evil, that it is not a problem to be solved by sole consideration of ways and means for

getting the little ones out of the factories, mills, streets, stores, nor by leveling furious accusations against parents, church, and school?

Involuntary poverty underlies child labor just as it underlies all our national ills. Involuntary poverty proceeds from the seizure of special privileges by the few at the expense of the common rights of the many. The presence of these inequalities in our laws and our lives puts a premium upon greed and cruelty and rapacity, and places a penalty upon the good and the fine and the fraternal. Out of them pours an acid that corrodes our entire national life, scarring honor and honesty and generosity, burning mother love and father love, and making existence a fever.

To continue the spirit of oligarchy that dominates the letter of democracy, all our institutions are robbed of vitality and efficiency, so that no revolts may be fostered. The church puts emphasis upon the next world, and the school is made to concern itself solely with the happenings of a buried yesterday and the putterings of the present.

Those who have pledged themselves to the good fight against child labor, therefore,

must prepare themselves for battles, not skirmishes—battles huge and overwhelming. For the fight is not between companies, regiments, or brigades, but between armies! It is the Struggle Everlasting, the struggle between spirit and flesh, between justice and injustice, between manhood and money, between democracy and plutocracy, between God and Mammon!

XIII

THE COST IN VICE, CRIME AND DISEASE

IT is only too true that the two million little children in the American world of work are as helpless as they are hopeless. They cannot free themselves by their own effort, nor is it in their power to stop the machinery that has them in its cruel grasp. It is because of this very helplessness and hopelessness, without doubt, that society has made the great blunder of reading a certain isolation, a definite detachment, into the fate of these small toilers, and that the great mass of people view the child labor evil with the same impersonal horror that they give to an earthquake in Italy, to a volcanic outburst in Martinique, or to a massacre in Russia.

These two million children are with us and of us. They are blood of our blood and bone of our bone. When society falls into the ghastly error of gazing upon them detachedly

and impersonally, it is as though the head should take only passing interest in a disease of the hip; or as if the legs were to regard blood poisoning in the arms as very regrettable, but not personally important.

Many a mother gains a lump in the throat as she reads of girls and boys robbed of health and happiness by the mill and the factory, by the shop and the field; yet she is soon soothed to her old content by the thought that *her* children, thank God, are safe from such dangers and deprivations. Many a father shakes his head gloomily enough at the things he sees and hears in connection with the ruthless exploitation of children; but, as in the case of the mother, he solaces himself with the assurance that *his* brood, at least, is removed from harm and safe from suffering.

Such as these are the fools of the world; and in money, tears, and heart's blood they are made to pay a terrible price for their selfish folly. The two million child workers live and suffer and die in seeming hopelessness and helplessness; but their revenge upon society is savage in its mercilessness and spectacular in its sweep. Vice and crime and disease are the instruments of retribution; and

where is there a home so secure that it may not be menaced by them?

"Sanitary clothing" for dolls, made in the germ-laden air of a foul tenement, may carry into the homes of ease and comfort a sickness that will turn them into houses of mourning. A girl, driven into the street by long hours of underpaid drudgery, may whisper in passing to the very son of her former employer, and from his hour with her may come a disease that will not only damn *him,* but also the children of his maturity.

Think it over, madam mother! Take that thought to yourself, complacent father! Lift your children high and higher until your arms break with the strain of it, and still will a groping hand come from the depths to clutch at their ankles!

Modern thought and research have done away with the ancient theory of "innate depravity," establishing certain definite economic and industrial reasons as principal contributing factors in the menacing, terrifying increase of what we call the Social Evil. The "daughters of joy," a phrase dear to the smug, are now seen as the victims of the victims of involuntary poverty, the debasing

environment that involuntary poverty compels —*ignorant* always and *defective* more often than not.

Every commission's report on the "street girl" touches on the intimate relation between vice and child labor; but the Minneapolis body, more clearly than any other, drives home the bitter truth in these words: "One does not need to go far along this line of research to reach the conviction that one of the first factors in tracing the source of supply is the increasingly large influx of very young and immature girls into industry. This is a situation that offers especially favorable opportunities for the breeding of conditions leading to the blasting of the lives of many young girls. The chances for the careless making of promiscuous male acquaintances, the close association of the sexes in employment . . . taken with the low wage scale prevailing in so many callings and affecting so many individuals, combine to create a situation that must invariably weaken the moral stamina and lead to the undoing of many."

Remember, if you please, the countless instances of tenement overcrowding that have been cited in previous chapters. Whole fam-

ilies packed in single rooms, adult boarders sleeping with growing children, and every intimacy of life and conduct robbed of privacy and compelled to be bared and degraded!

There must also be borne in mind a class of women drifted down from that terrible host "whose feet take hold on hell," a class that is forced at last into the cheap drudgery of the slop-shops. These poor hulks, diseased, dissipated and depraved, these outcasts of the outcast, seeking bread, creep into the crowded sewing dens to sit and work beside innocent girls.

Think on these things, and then bring an intelligent comprehension to bear upon the loathsome records of incest, immature maternity and "street walking" by thousands of children scarcely entered upon their teens!

Medical authorities are agreed that the breeding place of all venereal disease, without exception, is the social institution called prostitution. Here we have the curse that takes no account of condition or class. Innocence itself contains no salvation, for the pure in heart suffer equally with the guilty. As Dr. Prince A. Morrow, that eminent authority, pointed out so unsparingly, the

man cannot slip his disease from him when he enters the home, as though it were a coat; for "there is abundant statistical evidence to show that 80 per cent. of the deaths from inflammatory diseases peculiar to women, 75 per cent. of all special surgical operations performed on women, and over 60 per cent. of all work done by specialists in diseases of women, are the result of venereal infection. In addition, 50 per cent. or more of these infected women are rendered absolutely and irremediably sterile, and many are condemned to lifelong invalidism."

Horrible, to be sure, but truth has seldom been pleasant reading.

The records of juvenile courts prove conclusively the intimate relation between crime and child labor. Of the children at work, from ten to fifteen years of age, nearly 16 per cent. are found to be delinquent; while of the children at school, during the same age period, only 1 1-2 per cent. figure in delinquency proceedings.

Practically every form of industry that drags the child into the world of work is a "blind alley". What future is there for a boy who devotes ten hours a day to snipping

beans, shucking oysters, making artificial flowers, carrying trays in a glass factory, winnowing stone and slate from coal amid the blinding dust of the breakers, or replacing empty bobbins with full ones in the stifling atmosphere of a cotton mill? All that work under sixteen accomplishes is to rob the boy of his education, cheat him of his youth, stunt him physically and mentally, and unfit him for any future but that of unskilled labor, a market always glutted, and in which the wages are not sufficient to authorize marriage and a family.

The following table shows the percentage of all the cotton mills investigated by the government in the Southern group that were employing children in violation of specific law:

Virginia	50.0 per cent.
North Carolina	74.6 per cent.
South Carolina	91.7 per cent.
Georgia	64.5 per cent.
Alabama	61.5 per cent.

Do not imagine for one minute that this violation of the law is practised without the

knowledge of the children. All of them, practically, are trained in falsehood and perjury, for they must lie about their ages when they are asked. Whether it be the cotton mills of the South or of New England, or the factories and mines of Pennsylvania and Illinois, there is always the lie that most of the children must tell in order to "hold their jobs." Every juvenile court in the country has a tale to tell of the demoralizing effects of premature toil, which they all declare to be a principal cause of crime.

The money cost is appalling. The largest item in any municipal budget is that necessitated by the operation of the workhouse, detention-home, jail, and criminal court machinery; and in every State the penitentiary hangs like a millstone about the neck of the taxpayer. Chicago estimates the cost of caring for the average delinquent boy at $200 a year, and in smaller cities it will be found that the total is even larger. And when we go even further than the criminal institutions and their legal machinery—when we follow these manufactured prostitutes and lawbreakers into maturity and make record of their rickety, unfit children—we come to the

cost of asylums of all kinds, and the thousand and one charities.

It is only of late years that the fight against the child labor evil has been carried into the messenger service and the street trades. Tradition associates a certain sturdiness with "little merchants of the street," and there is nothing obviously alarming in the sight of the blue-clad boys carrying messages. Yet when one goes beneath the surface of these employments and inquires into conditions, it will be seen that there is a more intimate connection between them and vice and crime than in any other form of child labor. The investigation by the Chicago Commission proved that messengers and newsboys have an intimate knowledge of the ways of the underworld, and that their moral sense becomes so blunted as to make them absolutely blind to the degradation of women and the evil influence of vicious men. "Thus early in life," reads the finding, "they become diseased in both body and soul, and grow up to enter upon careers of crime and lust."

Day service, in large measure, brings the messenger-boy into contact with professional

and business life, giving chance for development and advancement; but at night when stores and offices are closed, the curtain of the underworld is thrown back, and the uniformed boy becomes the friendly agent of degraded women and baser men.

The newsboy is in little better circumstances. He races the streets at all hours of the day and night, sleeping and eating irregularly, and learning to dice, drink, and smoke through his familiarity with the places and figures of the night world. The fate of these youngsters in the night messenger service and the street trades is not left to conjecture. The statistics compiled from the books of reformatories forbid us to remain in doubt. Seventy per cent. of the inmates of these institutions are furnished by the messenger service and the street trades. What is that but the "manufacture of criminals"?

The Chicago Vice Commission, among its recommendations, urged an amendment to the present child labor law of Illinois forbidding the employment of any person under twenty-one in the night messenger service. The Vice Commissioners of Minneapolis and Portland made similar recommendations, at-

taching equal importance to this source of evil. New York, Massachusetts, Ohio, Maryland, Virginia, and South Carolina have already passed laws forbidding the employment of boys under sixteen in the night messenger service; and the first two states are also making sincere attempts to eliminate children from the street trades. Other commonwealths, however, have not yet fully awakened to the full extent of the danger and the shame.

It is possible, however, if one be stubbornly disposed, to put aside vice and crime as direct personal menace. Those who dwell on the hilltops, far above the shadows of the valley, may say: "What if child labor does breed prostitutes and criminals? I will guard my home, my boys and my girls, with such care that they need have no fear of disease and violence, and when my daughters marry I will require of the man a pre-marital certificate that will insure her against inclusion in those terrible percentages that Dr. Morrow gives. What then?"

A stupid attitude, and a cruel one, of course, but one that still possesses a certain validity. The daughters and the sons may be

saved to happiness and life by these precautions; but there is a third result of child labor that cannot be guarded against, except by attack upon the very system itself. This is the menace to the public health that lies in the propagation and spread of contagious diseases.

In England, in the early nineteenth century, a jet of poison spurted up out of a dingy Whitechapel sweat-shop into the splendid drawing-rooms of St. James. Heavenly Powers! Here was something to astound a nation. Disease and poverty were nothing to our bewigged and gartered parliaments, so long as they stayed pent up in the corrals and warrens of the disinherited poor. But when disease, fathered by poverty, showed its horrible face on palace floors, amazement stared, alarum sounded, England was on guard.

What caused this cry at the gates, this rush to rescue? The daughter of Sir Robert Peel was mysteriously stricken with typhus. The infection was traced to a stylish riding-habit ordered and fitted at a correct Regent Street shop, but finished in the tenement of a starving tailor with two children lying ill of

fever. When their shivering spells were on, the destitute tailor had flung the heavy robe over his fever-stricken little ones. It was not the first time that the plague of the toiling poor invaded the sanctuary of the mighty. It was not the last time. Hundreds of our own epidemics, emptying our schools and desolating our homes, are due to the desperate conditions under which many of our workers are forced to do their work.

Consumption well deserves to be called the "white plague." Bred in dark places, it gains a savage strength that enables it to beat down the doors of prosperity even, and to lay hold upon those sons and daughters who seem so safe from harm. Out of the consumptive child in factory, mill, tenement, or store may come the breath of contagion that will trail desolation across the doorway of the rich, the fortunate, the forgetful.

Medical science is now devoting much attention to the study of what is termed "occupational diseases". They are many and serious. Those who work in wool are in danger of anthrax; handling of lead and zinc in many of its forms leads to virulent poisonings; there are "brass chills" and "potter's

rot"; and for the unfortunates who labor in factories where white phosphorus is used in the manufacture of matches, there is a pleasant complaint called "phossy jaw," which results in the practical disappearance of the lower part of the face.

Terrible enough, but still bearable, for they affect only those who take such hazards. But consumption is quite another matter, for its germs refuse to stay where they are put, and travel on wings of wind. Bar the doors as fast as you please, you people of the hill-tops, and build high the walls about your homes, but still must you lie under the menace of the "white plague"!

Consumption and child labor walk hand in hand, for child labor industries are invariably low-wage industries, and low wages make for evil housing conditions and ill nourishment. The sitting occupations of the tenements develop lateral curvature of the spine, which adds greatly to the likelihood of pulmonary consumption; and this likelihood is enhanced by the foul air of those dark inner rooms where the children toil.

The dust of the coal-breakers, manned entirely by boys, poisons the lungs; the air

of the cotton mills is thick with "flue" and "fluff"; the heat of the silk mills and glass houses is in bitter contrast to the outside air of a winter morning; and the cannery sheds, both North and South, are without protection from the storms and the early morning cold.

"Home work," the ghastly industry that an inadequate wage forces upon the backs of small children and even babies, has dread significance for far more than a building, block or city. Toys for children; all manner of clothing for baby, youngster, and adult; picked nuts for candies and "health foods"; Irish lace and those other embroideries that sell as "imported"; willow plumes for my lady's hats and orange blossom rosettes for bridal slippers; all the hundred and one kinds of artificial flowers, lacy lingeries, "sanitary" hair and tooth brushes, dinner favors, dance programs—*these things go into the homes of the nation.* It is from the darkness and wretchedness of the tenements that most of the pretty things of life come to those who live and love and dress and play in the upper sunshine.

As one reads the reports of investigators,

and comes to a realization of the conditions under which these pretty things are made for the young and old of the upperworld, horror at the wages paid is soon succeeded by a very definite personal terror.

Workers among the poor have seen hundreds of little ones sick with some contagious disease, while on the infected beds were scores of articles in preparation for the stores and homes of America. The "pants" of the tenements have many times been the pillows and coverlets of measles, scarlet fever, and diphtheria. Visitors of the Bethel Mission, in Boston, tell of finding two little scarlet fever patients embedded on piles of unfinished trousers. The coat of a hundred-dollar dress suit being made by a fashionable Broadway firm, was recently discovered in a tenement, lying on the bed of a festering worker down with smallpox. It is to the comfort of opera box and dinner party that they do not always know the genesis of their adornments.

In one "home" a father, hectic and wan with advanced tuberculosis, lay on a rickety bed adjoining the bed of a babe ill with measles. The child's bed was a board laid

upon two chairs. Spread over the feet of both patients was an expensive cloak of silk, lined with squirrel-skin. From a fashionable shop the mother had brought the garment to be lined, and was now out for trimmings for the last touches. Here, poisoning this elegant wrap, were consumption, the most deadly of all diseases, and here was measles, the most infectious of all diseases.

Says Miss Elizabeth Watson, an expert investigator in the employ of the National Child Labor Committee, " I have seen a girl tying ostrich feathers in the desquamating stage of scarlet fever, when her throat was so bad that she could not speak above a whisper. She told me herself she had been sick with scarlet fever for ten days, but had been upstairs in a neighbor's room working for over a week. The skin on her hands was in such condition as to attract my attention and be recognized at once as scarlet fever, although she further authenticated it by telling me the doctor stated she had scarlet fever.

" I have seen men, women and girls with tuberculosis (who said they had tuberculosis and were going to tuberculosis clinics) working on doll's clothes, picking nuts, working

on feathers, and crocheting slippers. Our investigators have told us many stories of work being done in homes where there are sick mothers or sick members of the family, whose cases, after being reported and looked after, proved to be cases of tonsilitis."

Listen to these accounts, not from the pen of any well-meaning sociologist, but from competent, hard-headed men and women employed by the United States government itself:

"One home finisher visited had a little boy suffering from whooping cough. When he had a coughing spell, the mother thrust her finger down into his throat in an effort to relieve him. This caused slight nausea, and the mother wiped her fingers, covered with mucous, on the pants on which she was at work.

"In another case, where a child's head and face were covered with a loathsome rash, the mother constantly stopped her work of finishing pants, and caressingly ran her hands over this eruption, and then without washing them, took up the pants and continued the work. Asked what was the matter with the child, she could say only that her doctor told her it was some 'ketcha disease'.

"In practically all the homes of these workers spitting on the floor was a conspicuous custom.

"Many manufacturers contend that, no matter what the conditions of houses may be where garments are handled—no matter how filthy, diseased or germ-laden—the pressing with a hot iron destroys all germs and vermin, and that the presser always has a bottle of cleaning fluid to remove stains and dirt. But no one would willingly buy clothing that had been vermin-infected, or made in a home where one of the family had smallpox, even if assured and convinced that the garments were to be pressed with a hot iron before delivery, and cleaned with a cleaning fluid. The presence of the garment in the shop before the pressing is dangerous, not only to the presser but also to all other workers, and to the wearers of such garments as may be in process of manufacture in the shop. The shop enployees are liable to transmit the disease thus brought into the factory as they ride in street cars, or mingle with crowds in the street, stores, theatres, or elsewhere.

"It is not claimed that all home finishing is done under insanitary and revolting conditions; yet the fact that it can be done under such conditions, and that much of it is so done, forces the conclusion that such a method of maufacture should be abolished in the interest of the public health."

Frequently doctors are not called even in dangerous diseases; so contagion is not re-

ported. Cases are concealed, perhaps for lack of money; perhaps for fear that the patient will be taken away to the awful unknown of the hospital. In case of detection, the clannish tenement women, hearing the rumor that some neighbor has been quarantined by the board of health, will, with the ever present "work" under their arms, flock to the sick-room to condole with the family, keeping up their sewing and sighing around the infectious patient. No calamity must ever stop the bread-earning needles. Settlement workers tell of a child, dead of diphtheria, that was kept three days in a closed room, while a stream of visitors, some bringing their sewing, passed in and out by day and night. An epidemic of diphtheria in a wealthy village a hundred miles from New York City was traced by chance to the "knee-pants" purchased from a traveling agent selling the sweat-shop goods, of New York. Misery scatters widely her seeds. They may take root in hovel or in mansion. Let us no longer shirk responsibility for our epidemics. They are not "the will of God": they are the will of man.

So the sorry record runs!

Vice, crime, and disease breed and spread by a system that saps the strength and the youth of children, that keeps them in bondage and continues them in ignorance, that propels them into maturity dominated by no finer, higher impulses than sullen resentments, rebellious hatreds, and vicious desires!

How, then, may the child labor evil be regarded as something detached, isolated, impersonal—as a tragedy that affects only those who live in poverty and despair? How is it possible for those who dwell in the safe and sunny places to dismiss the horror with a doleful shake of the head, and a secret gladness that theirs is a different life and a happier environment? Surely the commonsense that lies in sheer selfishness, if the dictates of humanity are lacking, would seem to compel consideration and determined action.

Child labor is a swamp in our midst, and until that swamp is cleaned, who may hold himself safe from the subtle evil of its mists?

XIV

THE GREAT AMERICAN CANCER

THIS is a Christian nation. If proof is needed, count the churches. From coast to coast their spires bristle thick as wheat in the field, and in every community they constitute one of the largest single investments of capital. As a people, we are quite proud of the showing; and out of this pride and a certain great zeal, we spare neither time, pains, nor expense to carry this Christianity of ours to those other nations that "dwell in darkness."

Nothing else is quite so familiar to the Sunday-school pupil as collections for foreign missions. Each year sees a vast sum gathered by all denominations in these United States for distribution in such parts of the world as are peopled by "heathens," the purpose being to shower upon them the happiness, illumination, and well-being that flows from a knowledge of Christ and a belief in his teachings.

And all the while, two million little Americans are sinking deeper into a dull helplessness and hopelessness that is stupidly and savagely anti-Christian. Robbed of proper schooling, cheated of a chance to grow in body and in soul, made to forget laughter and play, this great army of toiling children tramp the industrial treadmill for outrageous hours, and snatch their brief sleep in a housing environment of almost incredible squalor.

To most of them Christ is no more than a "cuss word"; and as far as the slums in which they live are concerned, the Saviour died in vain. Even did they have the time to listen to Christianity—even did their sense of revolt against the injustice of it all leave them with inclination to heed Christ's message—what could they do, what is their opportunity?

Of late years we have fallen into a journalese habit of asking what Christ would have thought of this or that, or what He would have done in such and such a place. For instance, writers and preachers have surmised as to the Master's feelings and actions were He set down in Chicago, or put in charge of a newspaper, or given control of a depart-

ment store, etc., etc., all of which has been interesting rather than important.

No one, however, has yet written a book or preached a sermon on "What Christ Would Have Thought of Child Labor." Yet it is quite an obvious title, for the slightest consideration of the gospels will show that Jesus was incessantly and passionately interested in the welfare and happiness of children, as well as in the securement of industrial and economic justice for those who perform the world's toil.

Christ, in the last analysis, was an agitator, a rebel, an insurgent. He swept his barren, wretched land like a flame, crying out against burdens too grievous to be borne, striking terrible blows at ancient evils and established injustice. He preached heroic love and service, and the brotherhood of man was as much on his lips as the fatherhood of God. In no sense is that wonderful career at all intelligible save when considered as a heroic attempt to substitute a more wholesome and brotherly environment for cruel industrial conditions.

We may have to guess what Jesus would do if He came to Chicago or if He edited a

daily paper, but we can tell authoritatively what He would do if brought face to face with the present child labor problem of the United States. He would sweep through the cotton mills of the Union with a whip in his hand, and the owners of the glass factories, woolen mills, and coal mines, and the operators of sweat-shops and all those other agencies for the exploitation of little children would shiver under the passion of his denunciation. Imagine him in a Gulf Coast shed of a cold, raw morning before the dawn, holding in his lap a whimpering, chilled, sleep-sick lad of eight or nine and looking at the little fingers with holes eaten into them by the acid that exudes from the head of a shrimp! Or amid the noise and dust of the anthracite coal-breakers, where boys just entering their teens dare disease and death! Or in the dark inner rooms of a city tenement, where babies work ten to fifteen hours a day, making artificial flowers!

In the preceding chapter the results of child labor have been shown in the spread of disease, the incubation of vice, and the manufacture of crime. If there be these hurts to the body, what may be the consequences of

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the evil with relation to the soul? A nation that builds its religions about Jesus of Nazareth, and erects thousands of churches to his glory, and still permits its industrial machine to mangle nearly two million little children, is a nation that is on the road to spiritual death.

Of a truth, this child labor evil may well be called the Great American Cancer. It eats at the body and it eats at the soul; it saddens today and it damns tomorrow. Its decay is felt by the race no less than by the individual; by society no less than by the home. Very likely these assertions may be dismissed as exaggerations, for it is the general habit to think of child labor, and of every other evil, solely in connection with the present. It is the future, however, that is most menaced by this cruel and stupid system that mints money out of the health and happiness of our young. Much as today may be made to pay, it is upon tomorrow that the full weight of fearful consequences will assuredly fall.

Each year sees us spend a great many millions upon an army and a navy which are to protect us from some possible foe that may

attempt to overthrow our institutions, and this fear of armed aggression is exceedingly lively in a good many breasts. Yet child labor, in the last analysis, will be found to be a more terrible enemy than any hostile force that can come from the outside. It is the spreading rotten spot in democracy.

During the days when Lord Shaftesbury was sounding the alarm that aroused England to the perils of child labor, he invited the famous Dr. Arnold to make a tour with him of the district where the factory workers huddled in misery and squalor. All night they walked the filthy streets lined with wretched houses, and as the morning broke, the schoolmaster turned to the statesman and said: "Many years ago the Goths and Vandals swept down and destroyed the civilization of Italy. If we Englishmen do not take thought of these thousands of workers, another horde here in our midst will rise up and destroy all that our civilization holds sacred. We can no longer ignore these helpless beings as they have been ignored in the past."

If it is true, as has been said, that we of America are watching a neck-and-neck race between reformation and revolution and if it

should happen that revolution ever wins—rest assured that the historians who write of it will place chief blame upon the industrial condition that poisoned American citizenship at its very source—the child. The physical diseases that flow from child labor are tangible and understandable. Consumption and smallpox, for instance, are fixed facts; and when "garment-finishing" carries the germs from tenement to home, the process stands comparatively clear. When one takes the trouble to look closely, the national diseases that flow from child labor are just as visible and understandable.

Take, for instance, the West Virginia uprising. Thousands of miners finally rebelling against practical slavery, took up arms and arrayed themselves against the combined forces of the State militia, detective-agency thugs, and court officials. Driven from their homes, systematically starved, shot at with dum-dum bullets, railroaded into the penitentiary by court-martials, child-bearing women kicked until the poor, pitiable souls could no longer feel the stir of the unborn—is it any wonder that the wild-beast stage of fury was soon reached?

Or let the story of Lawrence be recalled. Even the citizens of that staid old Massachusetts city were surprised when a sudden strike poured 22,000 wild-eyed foreigners into the streets—for they had not known they were there. Poles, Slavs, Russians, Croatians, Belgians, Lithuanians, Austrians, French, Armenians, Roumanians, Serbs—scarce one speaking English—shouted protest against a wage-cut that brought the average earnings down to $5.50 a week.

These two instances are cited at random. West Virginia has long been the paradise of the child-slaver, and today stands as one of the few remaining states that allow immature children to work unlimited hours in mines, glass houses, and factories. As for Lawrence, the whole textile industry there rests on the bent backs of little children. Child labor industries, bear in mind, are always low-wage industries; for where children are permitted to do the work of adults, it will not be long before the adults are receiving children's wages.

That indeed is the question. What sort of masters are we providing for tomorrow? Just how much education, patriotism, and

fine citizenship may be expected from the youngsters who are herded by bayonets in Lawrence or starved in burlap tents on the mountainsides of West Virginia? What training in civic duties and fitness for sovereignty may be looked for in the day-and-night toil of the tenements, the drudgery of the mills, the glare of the glass houses, the gloom of the mines, and the aches and cuts of the canning shed?

During the Lawrence strike, police and soldiery rode down men, women, and children and herded them into the courts; and their treatment by the judges may be argued from this dictum, laid down by an eminent jurist named Mahoney: "Very likely these foreigners do not mean to be offenders," he said. "They do not realize the gravity of their offense and do not know the laws. Therefore the only way we can teach them is to deal out the severest penalty." Think of it! The frankest recognition of the pitiable ignorance of these poor, bemuddled children of the Old World, and the equally frank assertion that the one way to teach them the duties of American citizenship was to beat them and jail them!

The illiteracy records are no more hopeful. Commonsense points out that the imperative safeguard for the ballot in a democracy is education; yet the United States government itself is responsible for the statement that not fifty per cent. of the children at work at fourteen have ever had twelve months of real schooling.

In Germany, France, Switzerland, and the Scandinavian countries it is the exception to discover children of ten who can not read or write, while in this "land of opportunity" it is the usual thing. Mark these statistics:

There are 6,000,000 illiterates in the United States! One out of every seven children between ten and fourteen is not at school! Twelve per cent. of American citizens are not able to read the names on the ballots they vote!

The intimate connection between child labor and illiteracy is proved by the fact that the eleven great child labor states—Louisiana, South Carolina, Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, North Carolina, Virginia, Florida, Tennessee, Kentucky, and West Virginia—are the eleven most illiterate states in the Union.

It is not assumed, of course, that education makes the good citizen and lack of education the bad one. It must be admitted, however, that the child who has been toiling in field or factory during the proper school years will scarcely be as fit a citizen as the normal child who has gone to school and had his growth and play as well as his instruction.

It is in such fashion, then, that the child labor cancer eats. But that is not all. Its results do not stop with the criminals and prostitutes that it breeds and the sickness that it scatters. The boys and girls, stunted in mind, body, and soul by premature toil, marry, mate without marriage, and bring children into the world; and their children in turn marry and mate, and so on and so on, world without end.

Great surgeons tell us that the adolescent period is one of peculiar dangers; and yet it is during this time of mysterious development that we drive the fathers and mothers of the future into occupations that rob them of the right to bear healthy children. Miscarriages, still-births, rickety babes, sickly and feeble —this is the birth record to be expected, and it is what we are getting.

Child labor in America is still in its first generation, practically; but we can measure the extent of the calamity that we are inviting by consideration of English statistics. For two centuries Great Britain has permitted its children to be exploited for private profit; but today, horrified at the results, no country is striving more fiercely to repair its blunders.

The Boer War opened England's eyes. In Manchester, that home of the factory child, 8,000 out of 12,000 recruits were rejected as utterly unfit, and of the 4,000 retained, only a scant thousand were really up to requirements. A comparison with the records of the Crimean War, less than half a century before, proved that the average height had dropped three inches and the average weight about thirty pounds.

In 1845, to present some corroborative figures, the minimum height of recruits for the British army was five feet, six inches; in 1885, five feet, two inches; and in 1901 the authorities had to establish a special roll that permitted the enlistment of men only five feet tall.

It was in consequence of these revelations that the English government began its great

fight against child labor—a fight that has given the United States some figures that ought to blaze like the handwriting on the wall. It was found that among the female mill workers the death-rate of children under one year was one hundred and sixty per thousand, while the death-rate among mothers not factory workers was only forty per thousand.

Perhaps the most significant and conclusive experiment, however, was the study made between factory children and home children. Beginning at eight, the investigators secured the average height and weight of the two sets of children for each year up to sixteen. When the final comparison was made, it was discovered that the boys who had worked in the factories were 3.37 inches shorter than the home children, and weighed 19.67 pounds less.

Even did the work itself, done during the tender period of growth, fail to dwarf and retard, the housing conditions would inevitably produce unfitness. We hear much talk about the slums in these good, "charitable" days—for every industrial centre has slums now—and the very latest thing in up-to-date

philanthropy is "housing investigations" or "tenement commissions". These attempts are almost as ridiculous as though some kindly disposed person should attempt to cure smallpox by putting talcum powder on the sores.

A low-wage schedule makes the slum; and not until labor is rewarded by a just return will evil housing conditions disappear, for they are forced upon the wretched. Let it be repeated at this point that a child-employing industry is always a low-wage industry. Where trod Attila's horse, grass never grew again; and when the little foot of a child once crosses a factory threshold, decent wages become matters of reminiscence.

Many employers are fond of pointing out that they pay children and adults the same wages, trying, of course, to convey the impression that the uniformity of wage means that the boy is getting a man's wage. This is not so, nor has it ever been so. The child's pay is not *lifted* to the level of the man's, but the adult wage is forced *down* to the level of the child's. The cotton-textile industry, for instance, owing to the employment of children, has reached a point where

it is almost impossible for the head of a family to earn a living wage for himself and his family. Mark these annual earnings from the cotton mills, based, of course, upon the assumption that the male adult works through the fifty-two weeks without a break:

Doffers, $251; ring-spinners, $260; scrubbers and sweepers, $225; speeder-tenders, $385; spoolers, $252; weavers, $400.

And the estimated annual amount necessary for the bare upkeep of a family runs between $700 and $800. The Lawrence strike, bear in mind, was against a wage-cut that brought the weekly pay down to $5.50. Multiply this by fifty-two, the number of weeks in the year, and compare the result—$286—with the $700 that expert investigators have fixed as necessary for the "bare subsistence" of a family.

All because children got into the mills, caught hold of the wage schedule with their tiny hands, and pulled it down to their own level. What a revenge it is for the cruelty that robs them of their youth! Follow the working child where one will—into mill, factory, shop, canning shed, or mine—and invariably will it be found that child-pay soon

becomes adult-pay, with the result that the whole family must work twelve and fourteen hours a day in order to live.

The case of willow plumes is interesting as well as illustrative; for even while the main point is being proved, the women of the upper sunshine may get a glimpse of the way in which their adornments are manufactured. Willowing a plume—making it longer, deeper, and finer by tying on strands from other feathers—is drudgery epitomized. To quote a little Italian girl, " It maka da eyes sick."

When the rage first started, only adults were in the field, and the price paid was fifteen cents an inch. In a little while, however, some of the twelve- and fourteen-year-old children were taught the trick of tying knots, and the price dropped to thirteen cents an inch. More and more children, and younger and younger, went to work at willowing, with the result that the price fell from fifteen cents an inch to three cents in three seasons. One plume, containing 8,613 knots, which took a woman and two children almost a day and a half to make, brought $2.10. Fgure this out, and it will be seen that it

means forty-one knots for a cent, or about three cents an hour for each of the workers.

This, however, is slightly better than the usual rewards for "home work," since the average earning per hour in this class of labor is rarely over two cents an hour.

There is much to be written about the "economic loss" of child labor, but that would involve long tabulated statistics. Suffice it to say, therefore, that if a child of fifteen has a prospect of working until sixty —a good clean stretch of forty-five years— and child labor sends its product to the industrial scrap-heap in middle-life, cutting down the active and productive years to fifteen, then we have a right to argue an economic loss that runs up into the billions.

There is also the question of "social cost" to be considered, for not only does society lose through the destruction of the individual's earning value, but it is also made to pay a heavy and direct price for the evils that flow out of the child labor swamp. Look about you in your own community, and count up the cost of orphan asylums, insane asylums, poor farms, reformatories, jails, criminal courts and penitentiaries.

The thousands of children who drudge day and night in the tenements of the Eastern cities average two cents an hour; the government reports state that the average earnings of children under twelve in the Southern cotton mills vary from two and one-half cents an hour to about eight cents; few newsboys under twelve earn $200 a year; the wages of youngsters in the glass factories and on the coal-breakers range from $2.50 to $4 a week; the tiny toilers who work such incredible hours in the canneries are fortunate when they earn a quarter a day. Always and ever is there the same terrible disproportion between the toil and the reward.

It is from such as these—the two million children who barter youth, strength, health, and efficiency for a pittance—that the paupers and the criminals are drawn to fill the countless institutions that hang like millstones about the taxpayer's neck. They earn their pennies at expense of body, mind, and morals, and in their enfeebled and purposeless maturity become public charges at an expense of hundreds. What stupidity! Child labor lowers wages, breeds poverty, makes slums, scatters disease, fosters vice and lawlessness,

loses millions to society and costs society as many millions again, stunts development, poisons the health of the race, and degrades and debases citizenship.

Was ever such a birthright sold for so beggarly a mess of pottage! Our democracy is still an experiment. Civilizations greater than ours have perished from the face of the earth. Races, like individuals have their sicknesses and their death. If we are deaf to the humanities—if the words of the Galilean have lost meaning and effect—surely every instinct of self-preservation should compel the liberation of the two million little slaves who are so helpless to save themselves, yet so powerful to hurt us all.

XV

THREE GREAT CHILD-SAVING AGENCIES

THERE must be ground clearing as a matter of course. Existing evils and crying distresses must be heeded and relieved before entire energy can be devoted to the varied, complex fundamental causes. We need a federal law, or else the enactment of *effective* child labor laws in every state in the Union. To this end, let emphasis be laid upon *information* rather than *reformation.*

The American people are not mean or cruel from love of meanness or cruelty, but because they have never been brought face to face with the truth. Once let the *facts* of an evil shine clear, and nothing is more certain than the speedy development of an aroused and indignant public opinion. As a nation we have had our share of shameful omissions and criminal commissions; but there is a splendid abundance of incentive and in-

NOTE:—No statement of the forces working for the child would be at all complete that neglected to mention The Child Conservation League of America, which has its headquarters at 2421 S. Dearborn Street, Chicago, and has Winfield Scott Hall, Ph. D., M.D., for its President. Mrs. May E. Hoss, A.M., is the Secretary of this League, whose General Advisory Board contains many of the most distinguished names in American letters, education, and social service. Knowledge of this energetic movement came to us too late to give it the extended notice it deserves.

spiration in the fact that no injustice, small matter how ancient, intrenched or powerful, has ever been able to withstand concentrated publicity in these United States.

The burden of this fight, in the last analysis, will rest upon the women. It is for the mother sex to cut out the cancer that eats at the heart of our national health and happiness. The two million little ones that are caught in the jaws of the remorseless machine that drags them down to darkness and despair, lift their frail hands in pathetic appeal to the daughters of the Divine Mother. It is chiefly from the happy homes of the high places that help must come.

It is an attitude that may seem heavy with obvious unfairness. The child labor problem is a product of our modern industrial system, and this, as everyone knows, is the creation of man. But the question of fairness is not under discussion. Some method of solving the problem is. Facts are in charge of the sorry business, and facts care little whether they are fair or not.

The tendernesses of the world are for women. God indicated it very clearly when He gave her the passion and the peril of

motherhood. Man's chief interest, when all is said and done, lies in making the wheels go 'round. Too often the glitter of them blinds his eyes even as the roar stops his ears. It is woman's province to see that the wheels do not mangle. The task is huge, but the very greatness of it adds grandeur. As it is today, one child in every six is a burnt offering to the Money God. One dollar in every six has blood on it.

There isn't a state in the Union that does not boast its Humane Society. Nothing is more common than agitations against the wearing of birds' wings and aigrets. For a brutal driver to beat a horse is to arouse the good women of any community; and this same faithful animal has no lack of friends to get him drinking fountains and to urge that he be hatted and trousered in summer. Dogs and cats excite the protective instinct; and as winter breaks it is not usual to hear appeals in behalf of hungry squirrels in the parks.

It is not suggested that there should be an abatement of this tender interest in the welfare of dumb animals; but who will deny that it must *not* be manifested at the expense of

READING THE CHIMNEY TOPS YOU SPELL PROSPERITY—AND FORGET THAT THOUSANDS OF GIRLS ARE SPENT BEFORE MATURITY

children? A Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals is fine indeed; but it becomes an evasion and a hypocrisy when there is no all-round Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Little Children. There is such a thing as *squandering* pity, and it is too often the case that the dynamic emotionalism that could cleanse the world is frittered away on comparative inconsequentialities.

Child labor fighting, to be sure, isn't very spectacular. One cannot run into a cotton mill, mine, or glass house and drag the children out. One doesn't save the doomed children of the tenements by carrying them down a ladder while a multitude cheers. The process of rescue is through statutory enactments; and it takes a lot of time and trouble to write laws upon the books. Quite often the children themselves are never seen, nor word of thanks ever heard.

Yet, in the last analysis, what effort pays greater results? Those who arrest the striking arm or risk life in snatching away the baby that toddles in the path of the runaway horse, are only saving *one,* while those who secure the adoption of a child labor law by a state save *thousands.*

Nor is the task as ugly as some conceive it.

As pointed out, the child labor problem doesn't exist because all employers are mean and cruel. Women, in taking up the work, will be called on to enlighten, rather than to attack; for the underlying cause of the evil is ignorance, not avarice. Society has changed its views with regard to the child in many respects, and these employers of child labor have simply failed to change with it.

The State's interest in the home, for instance—its demand that the responsibility of the parent be recognized and discharged—is a very new thing. As late as fifty years ago a father could do what he wanted with his child, short of killing it, and the community never dreamed that it had a right to interfere. There is an 1870 report in the Bureau of Labor that tells how the child workers in a Rhode Island factory had cold water thrown in their faces when they fell asleep, and how, in cases of laziness or rebellion, they were whipped with a leather strap having tacks in the striking end. The father gave permission for these punishments; and while many good souls may have quivered with indignation,

they felt powerless by reason of the fixed belief that a child was the parent's *property.*

It wasn't that our ancestors were brutal. Even while this sort of thing went on—long before any measures for the protection of children—there were laws making it an offense to be cruel to animals. It was simply that it never entered their minds that society had any rights or interests in the child or that the parents owed the child even more than the child owed them. It was not until 1876 that Massachusetts, spurred to action by a Fall River fire that burned a number of seven-year-old children, established the rule that no boy or girl *under ten* should work in a factory.

The history of the National Child Labor Committee serves a triple service at this juncture. Not only do its achievements show how far we have gone on the road to a finer and more understanding humanity, confirming the truth of the assertion that *information* begets *reformation,* but a knowledge of this splendid organization will also indicate to the citizenship of the United States an effective medium for the transmutation of emotionalism into service.

It was in 1903—no longer ago than that—that Edgar Gardner Murphy, an Alabama clergyman, revolted against the horror of babies in the cotton mills of his state. His speech before a National Conference of Charities set a torch to the pity of the country, and out of the flame proceeded the National Child Labor Committee. Those who consecrated themselves to the work of betterment looked upon a land in which the majority of states permitted young children to work unlimited hours at every variety of monotonous and debasing drudgery, permitting it with an unconsciousness almost as cruel and complete as that of Rhode Island in 1870. Mark the progress of a decade!

Today there are child labor committees in thirty-five states, local committees in every great industrial centre, and child labor laws of some sort have been enacted in forty states.

In 1904 only fifteen states had a 14-year age limit for children working in factories; today thirty-four states and the District of Columbia have such a limit; and California, Montana and Ohio have set a higher standard. The number of occupations outside of

factories generally included in the 14-year age limit has increased.

In 1904 only eight states prohibited night work by children under 16; today thirty-two states and the District of Columbia have this provision; and sixteen states and the District of Columbia have limited the working day for children under 16 to 8 hours.

Since 1904 the night messenger service has been regulated by special laws in seventeen states; seven have closed it to persons under 21 years, and ten to persons under 18, in addition to California which forbids all employment at night of persons under 18 years.

Twenty-six states have so strengthened the requirements concerning a work permit that there is reasonable assurance that a child below the legal age will not receive one.

Inspection of child labor has been established, reorganized or made more efficient in every state except Arizona, Georgia, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota and South Dakota—tho much remains to be done.

Certain forms of child labor, in 1904 entirely unregulated, are now recognized as harmful and are included in one or another state child labor law. Thus in New York

State, agricultural work for anyone other than the child's parents is forbidden to all under 12 years, and boys 12 to 14 may gather produce only six hours a day; and in Tennessee, agriculture is included in the gainful occupations forbidden to all under 14 years during the school term. The New York child labor law now forbids tenement home work by children under 14 years. The age of children in street trades had before 1904 been regulated only in Massachusetts and New York: today twelve states and eight cities besides the District of Columbia have set an age limit for street trades.

A Uniform Child Labor law has been drafted and is receiving powerful indorsement; and in Washington there is a Children's Bureau and an Industrial Relations Commission.

In Congress there is the Owen-Palmer bill which aims a death blow at child labor by proposing the following law:

"No person, partnership, association or corporation or any agent or employe thereof manufacturing, producing or dealing in the products of any mine or quarry in which children under 16 years of age are employed

or permitted to work at any time; or of any mill, cannery, workshop, factory or manufacturing establishment in which children under 14 years of age are employed or permitted to work at any time or in which children between the ages of 14 and 16 years are employed or permitted to work more than eight hours in any day or more than six days in any week, or after the hour of 7 P. M. or before the hour of 7 A. M. of any day, shall ship or offer or deliver for shipment such products in interstate commerce."

Surely these successes fill a well of courage that no amount of faintheartedness can drain! That they have been won with inadequate funds and a small membership is an earnest of what may be accomplished with the full measure of support and coöperation that is the due of the remarkable men and women who are devoting their lives to the fight against child slavery.

Mr. Owen R. Lovejoy, secretary of the National Child Labor Committee, 105 East 22d Street, New York, has sounded a call for volunteers; and it is a clarion that should be heeded by all those who are unwilling that our industrial institutions should con-

tinue to rest upon the aching backs of growing boys and girls. It is the high duty of citizens to learn the exact conditions in their state and city, and to place a portion of their money and time at the disposal of the great organization that has led, and must continue to lead, the splendid crusade against ignorance, indifference and greed.

We must also cordially recognize the great services rendered by The International Child Welfare League and by The National Consumers' League. They do not put their sole emphasis upon child labor: nevertheless they are striking steady and powerful blows at the evil. The Consumers' League rests its cause upon the following belief:

"That the interests of the community demand that all workers shall receive fair living wages, and that goods shall be produced under sanitary conditions.

"That the responsibility for some of the worst evils from which producers suffer rests with the consumers who seek the cheapest markets, regardless of how cheapness is brought about.

"That it is the duty of consumers to find out under what conditions the articles they

purchase are produced and distributed, and insist that these conditions shall be wholesome and consistent with a respectable existence on the part of the workers."

In giving effect to this belief, the League has exposed the horrors of the sweat-shops, made clear the presence of children in unsuspected drudgeries, and turned the searchlight of publicity into a thousand and one dark places of industry. It has been a powerful factor in forcing the enactment of laws designed to protect wage-earning women from overwork, and furnished the real brains and energy in the legal defense of these laws when attacked in Oregon, Illinois and Ohio. Particularly, however, is the League interested in putting an end to Christmas cruelties through its "early Christmas shopping" propaganda, in the abolition of night work, and in the procurement of summer half-holidays for workers in stores and factories.

Mrs. Florence Kelley, 106 East 19th Street, New York, is the general secretary of the National Consumers' League; and from her an interested citizenship may learn what articles on sale in shop and store represent the lifeblood of little ones, and how to look

for the League's *label* so that those purchases may be avoided which swell the fortunes of employers deaf to pity and humanity.

We have already called attention to the loyal service rendered by The International Child Welfare League. They have their central office at 23 West 44th Street, New York City. They stand for eugenic principles, a wiser parenthood, a guarded childhood, moral education, effective vocational training, protection of motherhood, family insurance, and federal child labor legislation.

The League, supported by distinguished men and women, take the ground that State regulation of child labor will prove a failure because of the threat of business to leave the State and to go into other States where child labor is permitted. This threat tends to hypnotize the public conscience. Indeed, well-nigh all the friends of the slaving child are now convinced that their chief hope lies in a federal law that will place all the States on the same level. . . . And, you who read this testimony, these great child-saving agencies need your help—need your money and your moral influence. Harken to the cry of the children!

XVI

A GALLANT DEFENSE IN CONGRESS *

YES, the young children have not been friendless. They have had—and still have—many gallant defenders, and among the noble litany of names are Florence Kelley, Owen Lovejoy, Samuel McCune Lindsay, Scott Nearing, Edward T. Devine, Edward F. Brown, Felix Adler, Maud Nathan, and many others—all of them distinguished citizens and holding important places in our national affairs.

To the names of these veterans in this

* While Congress cannot directly prohibit child labor, still the prohibition can be levied indirectly under the powers vested in the people by the interstate commerce clause in the Constitution. In Gibbons vs. Ogden (9 Wheat) the Supreme Court decided that the power of Congress over interstate commerce is the same as the power of Congress over foreign commerce. See also the great case of Crutcher vs. Kentucky. Under our foreign commerce laws we have already prohibited *convict*-made goods and may also prohibit their transportation in interstate commerce. By the same token we may prohibit the transportation of *child*-made goods.

great service must be added the name of the Hon. Albert J. Beveridge of Indiana, who has the distinction of being the first to introduce into Congress a bill designed to secure a federal prohibition of child labor in the United States. For three days, during 1907, he addressed the United States Senate, presenting a vast array of affidavits on child labor conditions, and pleading our cause with ardor and convincing logic. But it was not possible at that time to beat down the wall of opposition, based on ignorance and self-interest. Yet the arguments of Senator Beveridge made in 1907 are still true and still timely in 1914. So we append a few of his many statements:

"I think that the broader aspect of this evil is purely national. It is not only State citizens that you are ruining, it is the citizens of the Republic as well. It is not only Georgia children that are being murdered, it is American children as well. It is not confined to Pennsylvania alone. It exists all over the Republic. I shall show by an affidavit that in the Northern States, in which the best factory inspection in the United States exists, the law is violated. It

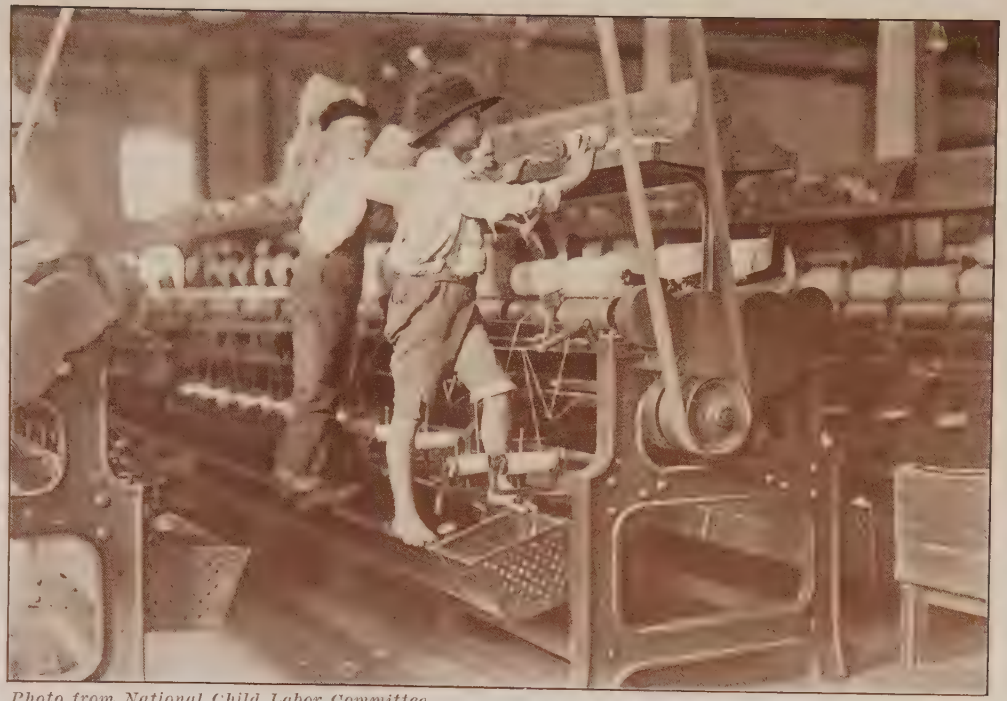


Photo from National Child Labor Committee

DOFFER BOYS IN A GEORGIA MILL, TOO SMALL TO WORK FROM THE FLOOR

is something which in its broader aspect the States cannot reach. * * *

"Notwithstanding the excellent factory inspection, I am going to show that in Illinois, whose law comes as nearly as possible to being perfect, it is violated. The truth about it is that the States are incompetent to deal with this question. *You have got to have a uniform law.*

"You have got to have the manufacturer feel that at any time, upon the application of any citizen, of any good woman who sees him take a child to work whom she knows to be under age, to apply to a court of justice, have him hailed by the United States district attorney before the United States district court, *and let him face the prison bars.* That will increase the manufacturer's watchfulness.

A WARNING TO THE SOUTH: A WARNING TO LABOR

"We have had much of this session taken up with a discussion of the race question. We have had the assertion of the superiority of the white race made time and time

again; that the white race would never yield to the black race.

"Yet the children who are at work in the southern cotton mills are from the white working class of the South; and this terrible situation stares the South in the face that, *whereas the children of the white working people of the South are going to the mill and to decay, the negro children are going to school and improvement.*

"I am glad to see the negro children going to school; but it is enough to wring the heart to think that day by day you are permitting a system to go on which is steadily weakening the white race for the future and steadily strengthening the black race for the future.

"It is not in the power of any man to keep 'superior' by *asserting* superiority. The truth of it is the South is face to face with the situation of their white children in the mills and their black children in the schools.

"That is my warning to the South. And now I wish to speak right here another warning to labor, and I will ask to put into my remarks numerous statements made under oath to prove it. I want the laboring men

and women of this country to understand what every labor leader knows—and if he does not know it he is not fit to be a labor leader or any other kind of a leader—that *child labor tends to bring down manhood wages and womanhood wages to the child-wage level.* You are not only killing your children, laboring men, but you are reducing your own manhood wages.

"Now I call the attention of the Senator from Virginia to the following affidavit:

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,
District of Columbia:

Personally appeared before me, a notary public, F. C. Roberts, who on oath says that in February, 1906, he was in Winchester, Va., in the interests of organized labor, and that he went at the noon hour to a large woolen mill and a knitting mill in Winchester, and that he saw the operatives coming out of the mills for their midday meal; that there were a large number of children employed under 14 and quite a number under 12, to all appearances; that at the same hour a large number of negro children came *out of a large negro school near by* for recess; and that the contrast was noticeable in the particular that *the negro children were playing*

and snowballing each other on their way home, while the *white children* employed in the mills were hurrying *with anxious faces to their lunch,* so as to return to the mill in time; and that he found the same conditions to exist in a number of towns in the South where textile establishments were located.

F. C. ROBERTS.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 26th day of January, 1907.

[SEAL] WM. A. EASTERDAY,
Notary Public, District of Columbia.

" I wish to call the attention of Senators on the other side of the Chamber to this statement. It is the affidavit to which I called attention yesterday, which shows that whereas the children of the white working class of the South are going into the mills, the children of the negroes are going into the schools. So Mr. Roberts declares that *at the same hour when he saw these white children coming out of the mill, he saw a large number of negro children coming out of a large negro school.*

" There is one way to solve the race question—*keep the white children in the schools*

as well as the negroes. I call the attention of the Senator from North Carolina, who has so valiantly defended the law of that State and attacked any method of stopping the evil all over the country, to the following affidavit, and will supply any number of additional ones that may be demanded:

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

District of Columbia, ss:

Personally appeared before me, a notary public, F. C. Roberts, who on oath says that in March, 1906, being in Salisbury, N. C., representing the American Federation of Labor, he visited a cotton mill on the outside of the town, called, to the best of his knowledge and belief, the "Salisbury Cotton Mills"; that he went through these mills and noted carefully the size and ages of the employees; that there were very few adults employed in the mills; that in the spinning department *90 per cent.* of the employees were children from *7 to 12 years* of age, to all appearances; that these children were compelled to work at and about machinery dangerous to life and limb; that many of them had *lost a finger or two* from the machinery that they were compelled to handle, and that several of them had bandaged fin-

gers; that one of the children, when asked how long they worked, said that they were compelled to work *eleven hours a day;* that in appearance they were pallid faced, hollow chested, and with emaciated limbs; that one of the children, when asked if they ever attended school, said that the *only chance they had was at night.*

F. C. ROBERTS.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 26th day of January, 1907.

[SEAL] WM. A. EASTERDAY,
Notary Public, District of Columbia.

"STATE RIGHTS" NOT INVOLVED

"I hear that 'States rights' is to be used as the excuse for killing this bill. I say there are no 'States rights' involved in this bill.

"Senators who are sincerely anxious about the question of the rights and the dignity of the States must not also forget the rights and the dignity of the future of the Nation. We have not any right to permit any State to produce in this Republic a degenerate class unfit for citizenship beneath the flag, because they vote at National ballot boxes as well as State ballot boxes, if any exercise of our power under the Constitution can prevent it.

CHILD LABOR AND RACE DETERIORATION

"The lowest estimate now is that we are pouring into American citizenship every year at least 200,000 London 'Hooligans,' boys and girls who are broken in body and stunted in mind and soul, and who *know* it, and who are living engines of hatred toward society—and I do not blame them—and who become the parents of still other degenerates. We all hear talk about the dangers of a certain 'lower class.' Had we not better do something to stop the production of that 'lower class,' that 'dangerous class'? Anyhow I shall try to stop it.

PURPOSE OF FREE INSTITUTIONS

"Why, Mr. President, when I think about these things I sometimes wonder what is the purpose of these 'free institutions' about which we talk so much. Why was it that this Republic was established? What does the flag stand for?

"Mr. President, what do all these things mean? They mean that the people shall be free to correct human abuses.

"They mean that men and women and

children shall day by day grow stronger and nobler.

"They mean that we shall have the power to make this America of ours each day a lovelier place to live in.

"They mean the realities of liberty, and not the academics of theory.

"They mean the *actual* progress of the race in the tangible items of real existence, and not the theoretics of disputation.

"If they do not mean these things, Mr. President, then our institutions, this Republic, our flag, have no meaning and no reason for existence.

"Mr. President, to see this Republic of free and equal men and women grow increasingly, with each day and year, as the mightiest power for righteousness in the world, has been and is and always will be, I pray God, the passion of my life—a Nation of strong, pure human beings; a Nation of wholesome homes, true to the holiest ideals of man; a Nation whose power is glorified by its justice."

Senator Beveridge's powerful speech, with its grim affidavits and stern indictments, is a memorable protest against one of the

treasons undermining our civilization. It is worthy to be written on that scroll of honor wherein we find inscribed those other protests against child labor and child wrongs uttered by Peel and Shaftsbury before the English Parliament a hundred years ago.*

* After the failure of the Beveridge bill, the Hon. William S. Kenyon of Iowa introduced into the Senate a bill along the same lines; but after the Owen-Palmer bill was introduced, he was moved by a fine patriotism to put all his influence behind the new bill, believing that it is a good one and that all friends of the young child should concentrate their forces.

XVII

CURING SYMPTOMATIC EVILS

MUCH has been done but much remains to do. The sob of the child still rises high above the hum of industry in many states. In the glass factories of Pennsylvania and the Virginias; in the canneries of Maryland, Delaware and the Gulf Coast States; in the cranberry bogs of New Jersey, the mines of Alabama, West Virginia, Kentucky and Pennsylvania; in the tenements of New York, Boston, Philadelphia and Chicago; in the cotton mills of New England and the South; in the street trades and messenger services of the cities; in the fields of the country, thousands of little children—fathers and mothers of the future—are still pouring their possibilities into the steel hoppers of the industrial mill.

These states have not yet established the 14-year limit for factories: Alabama, Mississippi (boys), Utah, Georgia, Idaho, Nevada, North Carolina, South Carolina, New Mex-

ico, and Vermont (where fewer than ten are employed).

These states permit children under sixteen to work at night: Arkansas, Georgia, Maine, Maryland, Montana, Pennsylvania, New Mexico, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, West Virginia, Washington and Wyoming.

It is in the Southern states and in the heart of New England that there is the most immediate demand for courageous and continued effort from such women as are willing to put youngsters on a par with birds, dogs, squirrels and horses; for in them one finds the Cotton Mill which has been so well described as the Herod among industries.

According to the government's figures, over 40,000 boys and girls under fifteen are swapping their futures for the pitiful wages paid in this business. Almost 30,000 are in the South, and in a previous chapter it has been shown how mere wisps of humanity toil day and night at the spinning frames. This industry is the backbone of the resistance to child labor reform; and in every state where there is a mill the cotton lobby is the dominant influence during every legislative session.

It is cotton mill states—Alabama, Georgia,

South Carolina and Mississippi—that persist in the disgrace of turning children of *twelve* over to the exploitation of the mill owners. North Carolina barely misses inclusion in this circle of shame with its age limit of *thirteen.* Yet even this statement of fact does not plumb the depths of their sordidness; for these laws are riddled by " exemptions " that allow an even bolder robbery of the cradle.

Georgia, South Carolina and Arkansas exempt the " children of dependent parents "; and Georgia, in a very ecstasy of exploitation, has a " joker " in its 60-hour-week law that permits ten-year-old orphans and family props to be worked eleven hours a day for the first five days of the week.

The Georgia situation is viciously typical of the lengths to which the cotton-barons will go in their pursuit of the child. In 1912, by virtue of a compromise between the champions of children and the Georgia Manufacturers' Association, a bill was agreed upon that would reach the 14-year age limit by 1916, certainly anything but a hasty arrangement. Representatives of both sides pledged words of honor; and when the House passed the bill by a vote of 111 to 10, the press of

the State jubilantly declared that Georgia had finally joined the ranks of the enlightened. The bill, however, was killed in the Senate, and the 1913 session also passed without favorable action.

F. B. Gordon, president of the association, and also president of a huge child-employing cotton mill in Columbus, confessed quite frankly to Dr. McKelway that he had caused the bill's defeat, blandly excusing himself on the amazing ground that it had failed to include children "working in stores".

This noble soul is also an enthusiastic supporter of an overworked canard to the effect that the "whole child labor agitation is the work of the New England cotton-mill owners who want to cripple the South." He himself is a Bostonian, and the capital invested in his mill is almost exclusively from the East.

South Carolina and Alabama, also cotton-mill strongholds, allow the soul-crushing 60-hour-week for its workers of twelve; and when the aroused public sentiment of Mississippi forced the adoption of a good child labor law, the cotton-barons were powerful enough to retain the right to exploit twelve-year-old boys.

Here is an advertisement that was printed in 1913, in the Choctaw *Advocate* of Choctaw County, Alabama:

> WANTED:—Families with children twelve years of age and up, to work in cotton mill. Good pay, regular work, comfortable houses, healthy location near City, convenient to schools and churches. Apply:
>
> MOBILE COTTON MILLS,
> Mobile, Ala.

This advertisement, with all its grim suggestion, awakened a loud protest from humanitarian newspapers. Here we see children bargained for as coldly as men bargain for droves of hogs.

And in connection with this bid for human flesh, the mill-baron has the calm effrontery to speak of "schools and churches." What have these children of twelve years, slaving at their ten- or twelve-hour shifts, to do with education: their work leaves them no strength for it, no time for it, no heart for it. And what can the Church do for children who are held in this deadly embrace of Mammon? With their souls deadened with drudgery, what chance is there for them

to rise to the high ground where they can feel "the beauty of the Lord"?

These slave children are qualifying only for the illiterate and dehumanized refuse of the cotton mill, the human scrap-heap. Oh, for a new Carlyle to cry again the mad absurdity of wasting the priceless and immortal stuff for perishable cotton cloth to cover or to decorate the body that crumbles!

Here is the way that one of the greatest editors in America cries protest against the spirit of this advertisement, which calls in the young children to the Moloch of the Mill:

"Every man in the State of Alabama knows that a child of twelve is younger in proportion than a horse two years old. No man drives a horse two years old, he *doesn't want to ruin his horse.* He knows that if he drives the horse when it is two, it will be worth nothing when it is full grown.

"He ought to know that if he works the child when it is twelve it also will be worth nothing when it is full grown.

"It would be well, if the South had a monopoly of that kind of advertising. But New England competes with the South in its

ill-treatment of children. And New York State, with better laws, is as bad as any, since bribery and lying defeat the law.

"The people do not need laws so much as they need *a conscience.* It is a disgrace to the nation, to every man in it, and especially to those that hold office, that tens of thousands of girls, at 'just the right age' for education, for play, for happy home life and for the first beginning of womanhood, are looked upon and treated as *just the right age to be fed into the front door of the mills, taken out of the back door and thrown as refuse on the rubbish heap—after having the life, the strength and the profit taken out of them.*

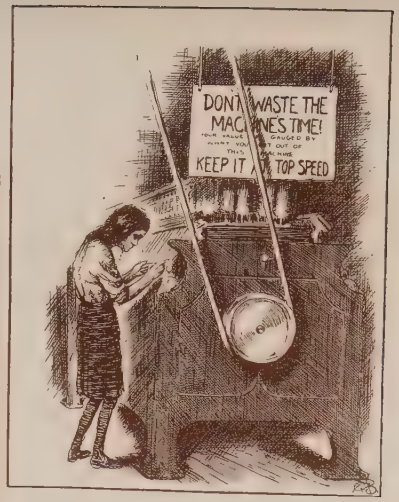
"This nation talks about its Christianity, its civilization. It organizes special 'go-to-church days,' it collects money for the heathen. It might postpone some of these things, as long as it permits money to be made by destroying the lives of children *just the right age to be deprived of every possible chance by the child labor system.*" *

That Choctaw County advertisement was from the gallant South; but now read this

* See the New York *Evening Journal* for January 15th, 1914.

Just the Right
Age for What?

His Daughter,
His Dinner,—
the Child in
His Factory



Kill the Child—
Save the Machine

Mammon cries hoarsely: "Don't waste the time of the machine; the machine is precious. Do not hesitate, however, to waste the children; plunder them, pillage them! They are plentiful, they are cheap!"

direction to the work-children posted conspicuously in a New England mill, in New England where Conscience was once the watchword:

DON'T WASTE THE MACHINE'S TIME!

Your value is gauged by what you get out of this machine. Keep it at top speed.

"Oh, true and tender is the North," was the old song of the poet; but note the cruelly inhuman calculation of this Mammon commandment of the Northern mill, a mill where children are told to kowtow worshipfully before the sacred machine. Mammon cries hoarsely: "Don't waste the time of the machine; the machine is precious. Do not hesitate, however, to waste the children: plunder them, pillage them: they are plentiful, they are cheap!"

So the Mammon cry goes out day and night over the merciless mills. But the thinking hearts of the nation are beginning to make a mighty protest, a judgment con-

demnation of it all. Again let us listen to the great editor, discussing this sign in the New England mill. His words are words that burn:

"It does not take much imagination to understand that sign, and to read the meaning that goes with it.

"You may burn up in two or three years of intense work five hundred children—*but don't waste the machine's time.*

"Poverty, hunger and the cursed system of wage slavery that pays just enough to keep the soul and the bones together drive the children to the mills.

"*They must hold their jobs.* Thousands of little children tremble when they see the foreman's frown. They dare not go home and say that they have been discharged.

"They strain their nerves, keep their fingers flying, their backs bent and their eyes straining upon a machine as they read the words:

"'Your value is gauged by what you get out of this machine. Keep it at top speed.'

"And the children *keep* the machine at top speed, and they keep their nerves, their hearts and their brains at top speed, for they must

do it. That is the price of the short life that is before them.

" The genius of mankind has invented the machine. It should clothe the millions, do the work, free the slaves, add to human happiness. But instead, miserable human beings and suffering children are fastened to the machines in a slavery almost as bad as was ever known before.

" The whole cursed system of selfish control of industry is read in those words, ' Your value is gauged by what you get out of this machine.'

" Never mind what the machine gets out of you. It gets your youth, your strength, your health, your opportunity.

" The machine gets from the child the hours that should be spent in learning, in play, in the sunlight.

" The machine ' kept at top speed ' gets the desperate energy and exhaustion of hundreds of thousands of children—and it is nobody's business.

" How long will it be nobody's business?

" How long will the men elected to take care of the country refuse to protect the children? How long will the nation that

hangs or electrocutes the miserable, half-insane criminal look on while business commits murder wholesale for the sake of profit?"

The theory that child labor agitation is merely a New England trick to hurt the Southern mills, is entirely disposed of for all time by the 1913 legislation in New Hampshire and Massachusetts. New Hampshire, so long the black sheep of the New England textile flock, raised its age limit from twelve to fourteen, although refusing to shorten the working day; while Massachusetts adopted the eight-hour day for all under sixteen, the first cotton centre in the world to go thus far on the road to humanity. With New England setting such standards, surely the cotton magnates of the South will no longer dare to outrage the sentiment of their communities!

Canning is another industry that persists almost without check in its wanton assault upon the child. Great packs of men, women and children, herded like cattle by padrones, shuffle back and forth between the berry fields of the Atlantic seaboard and the oyster and shrimp canneries of the Gulf Coast States,

leading lives of unutterable hopelessness and wretchedness. Who can have forgotten the shudder of revulsion that shook the country when it was told how the acid that oozes from the head of a shrimp ate holes in the hand of baby-workers? This condition was remedied when the packers found that the acid also ate holes in their cans; but as the cure consists of packing the shrimps in ice for several hours, the change for the tots has been from perforated hands to frozen ones.

Many evils and abominations persist, however. In the Gulf Coast States, children of all ages are hurried from their beds before dawn and driven into the dreary shucking sheds to toil the long day through.

Housing conditions also reach the acme of evil in the canning industry. The shacks of Mississippi, Louisiana and South Carolina are unfit for human habitation; and in Delaware it is said that a dog is afraid to leave his kennel for fear he will find canning children in it on his return. Is it any wonder that under such conditions there is a sequence of general brutalization such as finds expression in this comment addressed to Mr. Lewis W. Hine by a Biloxi factory owner:

"I have seen them whip the children when they would not work. Of course, we don't want them to do that, because if the child labor people knew it they would be lying about us as they are lying about the canneries up in New York. We don't want them to know about this because they would not understand that it is better for these low people to be at work. They don't want school. The children who grow up and can't read and write are always better off than those who can, because as soon as they get a smattering of education they want to strike for higher wages. You can look all around this place and you won't see a sickly child. It's wonderful how they do it working as they do. They sometimes get up at two o'clock in the morning. They're just like cattle. If you just let them know you have work for them, everyone will tumble out of bed, and without washing or eating they'll be at the plant in a jiffy."

The legislatures of New York and Florida, in 1913, freed their states of continued inclusion in the cannery list of shame. New York should never have been soiled by any canning horror, for there was no question that

the child labor law was meant to apply to this industry as well as to all others. In 1905, however, one Julius M. Mayer (now on the federal bench by grace of Taft) was attorney-general of New York; and in this capacity pleased the canners by holding that the law applied only to the factory building proper, not to the sheds in which the children worked. Until the 1913 legislature aimed a bill directly at this evasion, the New York canneries vied with the Gulf Coast States in their merciless exploitation of small children.

Note here the further fact that the child labor laws of the following states exempt canneries from any regulation as to age of children employed or hours they may work: Ohio, Maryland, Delaware, Indiana, Colorado, California, Michigan and Mississippi.

It is as we leave the fields, however, and approach the cities that the most terrible form of child labor comes under observation, for it is in the tenements of the great centres that "home work" flourishes. In a previous chapter enough has been told to acquaint one with the true nature of this cannibal industry that fattens on the bodies of toddlers. Surely, if walls could be torn away, letting

the squalid drudgeries be seen of all men, there would be no more happiness for anyone until remedies were applied.

When one sees tots of three and four working early and late at artificial flowers, kiddies of seven and eight contracting curvature of the spine at machines, and older children plying lightning fingers four hours *before* school, and until midnight *after* school —whole families working in dark, noisome rooms—the average earnings two cents an hour—and then turns away from such contemplation to read where this rich woman has bought an island as a "sanctuary for birds" and that rich woman is leading a movement to purchase peanuts for the squirrels in Central Park, how is it possible to keep from looking up in the expectation that God will do something about it?

New York, more responsive to public opinion than Boston, Chicago, Philadelphia or Baltimore, capped its efforts at regulation with a 1913 law forbidding the manufacture of babies' and children's clothing in the tenements, also food articles, and prohibiting the employment of children under fourteen in tenement manufactures. Small credit at-

taches to the legislators for these statutory enactments, for there was not a child labor expert that did not beg the lawmakers to realize the utter impossibility of parleying with the evil.

What if clothing for the young and food articles are put under the ban? There still remain some ninety-odd articles that may be manufactured in the tenements with full sanction of the law. What if children of fourteen are told by the statute books that they must not labor in the making of these ninety-odd articles? They cannot be driven from the homes in which the work is being done; and the history of the industry proves nothing so plainly as that these poor industrial slaves account the law a cruel, mysterious thing to be fooled whenever possible.

As Mr. Lovejoy pointed out, the enforcement of these laws in the 13,000 licensed tenements in New York City alone would call for 39,000 inspectors, since there must be constant watch, and in view of the fact that the inspectors themselves refuse to work longer than eight hours a day.

"Home work" must be wiped out entirely, and the manufacturing industry carried back

into the factory where there is opportunity for inspection and supervision. Talk of regulation is balderdash when it isn't trickery. A community might as well try to regulate smallpox.

It is in the cities also that we find the street trades and the night messenger service —two entirely dangerous and demoralizing occupations for children. There is not a report of any of the vice commissions that does not recommend a law forbidding street trades to girls under 16 and boys under 14, and barring the night messenger service to all boys under 21. Reformatory records prove that 60 per cent. of the inmates are graduated from street trades, while the vice commissions learned a sorry story of the dissipations and loathesome immoralities into which the night messenger service lured its youngsters.

Thirteen states and seven cities have laws regulating street trades, but in no part of the country has commonwealth or community attempted to keep children under 14 entirely out of the demoralizing industry. Delaware, Florida, Maryland, Missouri, New Hampshire, New York, Oklahoma, Utah, Wiscon-

sin, Boston, Chicago, Cincinnati and Newark prohibit girls under 14, 16 or 18 in certain street trades; but of these New Hampshire allows girls of 10 and Utah girls of 12 to black boots and Newark mentions only the selling of newspapers. *No state nor city has* passed an age limit higher than 12 for boys in street trades.

Across the cranberry bogs of New Jersey moves a vast army of little ones. From dawn to dusk they crawl on their knees through icy pools and clinging mud, tearing their hands on vines, tormented by mosquitoes, driven like beasts by the padrone who herds them. At night they huddle in sheds scarcely fit for animal habitation.

West Virginia, that state where a citizen has no rights that a court-martial is bound to respect, is another Southern commonwealth that shames its traditions. While it enjoins the 14-years age limit, it does not prohibit night work, makes no regulation of hours, and demands inadequate proof of age. As a result, the West Virginia mines, glass factories, canneries, potteries, tinplate mills, stogie factories, glue and worsted mills are allowed to do as they will with the children.

Virginia, that proudest of the proud, narrowly misses inclusion in the black list. At that "the Mother of Presidents" is far from white. It was only after the bitterest kind of fight that the age limit for working children was raised from 12 to 14; and the exemption in favor of orphans and children of dependent parents still keeps a hole in the barrier large enough for twelve-year-olds to be dragged through.

Kentucky, in spite of its mines and manufactures, refuses to shorten the long ten-hour day for the fourteen-year-old.

Pennsylvania, as might be guessed from the proved servility of its senators and congressmen where Big Business is concerned, is a backward state in child labor reform. Boys of fourteen crouch ten hours a day amid the dust and roar of the coal-breakers and work all night in the glass factories, while the silk mills are a worthy rival of the cotton mills when it comes to exploiting childhood.

Missouri's fairly good law is crippled by a "joker." The activities of the state factory inspection department is limited to cities over 10,000, and it happens to be the case that

most of the factories and canneries are in towns under 10,000.

These are a few of the more glaring evils. Not a state in the Union but has its cancer spots that investigation will reveal. If it is not a child labor problem in connection with factories, tenements, mines or stores, there is always that sacred cow of industry—*agriculture.* As yet the drudgery of growing children in cotton, berry and tobacco fields, cranberry bogs and corn rows, is untouched by any law, yet the country has its Smikes no less than the city.

Nor is it enough to write fine sounding laws on the statute books. The best child labor law ever devised is not worth the paper required to pen it unless money and authority are provided for its enforcement. Georgia, North Carolina, North Dakota and Arizona have no inspectors to enforce their child labor laws, and in South Dakota inspection is limited to mines.

New York has 110 factory inspectors for its whole huge extent. Massachusetts, with 56,000 manufacturing establishments, has *eighteen* inspectors and Illinois gets along with *thirty.* Both departments admit that

they cannot hope to cover the field more than *once in four years.* Pennsylvania boasts fifty-nine inspectors, Ohio *thirty-three,* New Jersey *twenty-two,* and Rhode Island, Connecticut and New Hampshire beggarly handfuls. Vermont has just passed a law providing for a state factory inspector.

No proof of age is required of children seeking employment in Alaska, Hawaii, Nevada, Texas, Virginia, Washington, Wyoming; and in three states, no proof of age is required unless age is challenged by the enforcing official: Arkansas, documentary evidence or affidavit, Iowa, documentary proof or, that failing, parents' affidavit together with affidavit of two disinterested persons, and Utah "satisfactory evidence." One state, Connecticut, has established an educational qualification but requires no proof of age.

No proof of age except the parents' affidavit is required in Alabama (applies only to vacation certificates), Georgia, Idaho, Mississippi, Montana ("satisfactory proof") North Carolina (written statement not under oath), South Carolina, Tennessee, Vermont.

Even when documentary proof of age is

demanded there are sly ways of evading the spirit of the law. In Rhode Island, for instance, it is not at all uncommon for a birth certificate to get a job for one fourteen-year-old boy, and then perform a similar service for four or five younger brothers and a cousin or two, all because it is not required that the birth certificate shall be kept on file.

In consideration of the criminal parsimony where the futures of little children are concerned, a note of savage satire is provided by allusion to the sums that several states appropriate for the protection of profit-making industries. During a recent year Louisiana spent $130,000 for the protection of game birds and fish, and just $900 for factory inspection.

Mississippi makes the same distinction between human and property values, spending $187,855 in five years for replanting depleted oyster beds, yet steadfastly refusing to provide one single cent for factory inspection. This unimportant task is left to the sheriff who, in his odd moments, is presumed to inspect the 2,600 mills and factories in which the supposed age limit for boys is twelve years.

Alabama is rich enough to spend thousands each year to protect game and fish, to devote an equal sum to its "history and archives," and to squander $24,000 for a militia encampment, but it has never felt rich enough to devote a penny to the protection of the twelve-year-old children in its factories and mills.

The South is not alone in its shame, however. It was only last winter that the Indiana legislature refused to appropriate $5,000 for the better care of *children* and agreed to appropriate $15,000 for the better care of *hogs!*

North, East and West there is a joyous willingness to spend the people's money on cattle and soil, while there is a grudging unwillingness to devote a dollar of the tax collections to the salvation of children. Small salaries and small appropriations are the rule in the United States.

It is a chronicle of present evils and imperative reforms that might be continued indefinitely. The citizens of each state must search for themselves. Let them find out *what* their child labor laws are, by *whom* they are enforced, and *how* they are enforced. Then let them get into the fight. Not until individuals

realize their responsibility and their power will the curse of premature toil be lifted from the childhood of America, and the little ones that Jesus so loved be given opportunity to keep and enjoy the divine birthright of health and hope.

XVIII

UPROOTING CAUSES

WHEN symptomatic evils have been cured—when every state has effective prohibitive laws or when we have an effective federal law—then may the fight against *causal* evils be commenced in certainty and intelligence. This will be the Great Task, making demand upon more lasting, granite qualities than emotionalism, sympathy or indignation.

Heroism is on tap during the progress of a yellow fever epidemic, yet it is very hard indeed to excite enthusiasm in the far more important work of pouring oil on the myriad pools that permit the yellow fever mosquito to breed. The bubonic plague inevitably develops a high degree of courage bordering on martyrdom, but irritation and resistance are invariably encountered when the subsequent fight is made for garbage incineration and concrete flooring as part of the war of extermination against the rats. Child labor, like

epidemics, is not a *cause,* but a *result;* and to effect a real cure, to guard against all recurrence, the stagnancies that have formed in our habits, customs, traditions and institutions must be drained and cleaned.

It has been seen that the mere making of laws is not enough. All the horrors of tenement sweat-shops in the cities of New York —the blackest and most terrible page in the history of the Empire State—came from an infamous decision in the "Jacobs' case". There was no question that the New York legislature of 1905 meant to bar toddlers from the canning sheds; but here too there was a helpful decision that held that the shed was not part of the cannery. That the style in New York judges is not materially altered is proved by the recent fine of $20 levied against the proprietors of the Triangle Shirtwaist factory for locking the doors of their workrooms on 150 girls—*the very thing that sent one hundred and forty-seven to a horrible death in 1911.* What is this but an announcement to greed that in New York it costs only 13 cents apiece to subject working girls to daily danger of horrible death?

In Colorado a supreme court, from time to

time, has seen fit to declare a child labor law unconstitutional, also an eight-hour law for women, etc., etc. As an answer, Colorado gained the Initiative and the Referendum, and as a first use of these tools of democracy, changed the constitution so as to give the people the right to recall *judges,* likewise the right to recall their *decisions* in questions involving constitutionality.

This one illustration, as aptly as any other, indicates the scope and nature of the fight against child labor *causes.* All sorts of old flooring may have to be ripped up and replaced with sound, *rat-proof* concrete. There is no room in this struggle for fundamentals for those who believe that a thing is *good* just because it is *old,* or that an institution should be cherished even when it is plainly outworn. The Lady Bountifuls who put charity above justice—the Honorable Order of Pussyfoots —the worshippers of tradition—those who are always afraid that a jump out of the frying-pan will put them in the fire—persons such as these should not enlist in the new struggle that must follow fast on the heels of the one just finishing.

When public sentiment has burned the

abolition of child labor into the statute law of the state, we must be careful that some judge, insistent that *property* rights be kept above *human* rights, does not set the prohibitory statutes aside by a scratch of the pen. It may be that this need can be met by electing a higher type of judges, or it may be that the safety will be found to lie in the two recalls gained through the medium of the Initiative and the Referendum.

Child labor, as has been mentioned and admitted from the first, is essentially a "woman's problem"; that is, women are responsible for the demand that the exploitation of little ones shall cease, just as theirs is the responsibility for the assaults upon the liquor traffic and commercialized vice. The ten states that have equal suffrage have already abated their child labor evils, and are establishing the *rule of the people.* Whatever the history of the fight for better laws may have been, there is little doubt that the campaign against causes will develop the necessity of the vote for women. Another instance this of how floors may have to be torn up in the House of Prejudices.

The "silent influence" may be all right in

some localities; but when we consider that it took Massachusetts over fifty years of concentrated effort to get an eight-hour law for children under sixteen only, and compare it with the fact that Washington and California won eight-hour laws for women and minors almost simultaneously with suffrage, it commences to dawn that the ballot is a surer, quicker way.

Education, as a matter of course, must be brought to play a larger, finer part in every life. As has been said, child labor means adult ignorance and adult ignorance spells disaster, especially in a democracy where successful government is dependent upon an enlightened citizenship. In the chapter devoted to portraying the racial and national dangers of child labor, some statistics of American illiteracy were given that should come as a shock to all but the permanently sodden. A chief feature of the fight to remove child labor causes must be the provision of wiser, better and firmer laws with regard to juvenile education.

Florida, Mississippi, South Carolina and Texas are the only states in the Union today without compulsory school attendance law;

although five others possess statutes so grossly inadequate as to be almost worthless.

Alabama: Child 12 to 16 years employed in a factory must have 8 weeks' schooling during each year of employment.

Georgia: Illiterates under 18, in an employment entered under 14, must furnish employer each year affidavit of parent or guardian, certifying 12 weeks' school attendance.

Louisiana: Provisions applying only to the parish of Orleans.

North Carolina: Apprentices 12-13 must have attended school 4 months in preceding 12. Also there is a state law which is not in force until voted by township or school district, requiring attendance at school for 16 weeks of all children 8-14 that are not excused for poverty.

Virginia: Law not in force until voted by district requires attendance of all children 8-12 unless excused "for cause".

Only ten states and territories require the attendance of all children 7-14 (16 if illiterate) for the entire school term without exemption for poverty, viz.: Connecticut, Illinois, Indiana, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Massachusetts, New York, Vermont, Wis-

consin. Twenty other states and territories have compulsory school attendance for the entire school term without exemptions for poverty, but set an age limit higher than 7 or lower than 14 (16 if illiterate): Arizona, California, Colorado, District of Columbia, Hawaii, Idaho, Kansas, Minnesota, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Dakota, West Virginia, Washington.

Seven states require attendance for some period less than the full school term without exemptions for poverty; in most of those states the law is defective also in regard to the ages between which school attendance is required: Delaware, Iowa, Kentucky (except in cities), Missouri (except in cities of over 500,000), Nebraska (except in cities), Oklahoma, Pennsylvania (in places of less than 5,000 at discretion of local School Board).

Five states require not only less than the full term but weaken the school attendance laws still further by exempting children for poverty: Alaska, Arkansas (law excepts 28 of the 75 counties), Utah, Wyoming.

As somewhat typical of the manner in which the child labor question figures in the perpetuation of these shameful conditions, the case of South Carolina may be cited. At the 1913 session of the legislature a bill was introduced providing that children between 8 and 13 should be sent to school unless the labor of the children was necessary to their support. A local option clause was attached, providing that the bill was not to take effect until approved by a majority of voters in each county. In process of enactment the age limit was reduced from 13 to 12, the school term reduced to three months, and various cotton mill counties were exempted; but even in this emasculated form Governor Blease vetoed. One legislator, a preacher named Lybrand, said that "he believed compulsory education to be against the fundamental principles of our American democratic institutions."

Men like these are not cruel; merely stupid and ignorant. A first task is to educate the Bleases and the Lybrands, and a second task is to commence working for the increase of the compulsory education age from 13 and 14 to *sixteen.* The children of the country

must not only be rescued from industrial slavery but also from their servitude to ignorance. They must not only be taken out of the mill, mine and factory but they must also be put into school.

Here again we meet with a new demand for an assault upon the established order. Almost incredible as it may seem, nine out of ten child workers prefer their toil to school attendance. What will it avail to pass compulsory education laws as long as the children for whom we enact such legislation do not want to obey?

Nevertheless, no child should be permitted to practice sabotage upon his own life. We protect the child from fire: why not protect him also from his own folly?

But why is it that thousands of children have a seated dislike for the schools we offer them? For it is frequently true that children prefer the hard drudgery of the mill to the dull monotony of the school. Helen Todd, an alert factory inspector in Chicago, in her article, "Why Children Work: the Children's Answer," brings to a sharp focus some aspects of this phase of the child labor problem. She has questioned

hundreds of employers and children; and she reaches the solemn conclusion that a civilized person can hardly face the horrors of child labor without doubting the very value of life itself. Here are some of her tragic findings:

"In 1909 I took 500 children out of twenty factories in all parts of Chicago, and asked them this question: 'If your father had a good job, and you didn't have to work, which would you rather do—go to school or work in a factory?'

"Of 500 children between the ages of fourteen and sixteen, 412 said they would rather work in a factory than go to school. These astonishing and unlooked-for statistics bewildered me.

"I wrote down their reasons as they gave them to me: 'Because you get paid for what you do in a factory.' 'Because it's easier to work in a factory than 'tis to learn in school.' 'You never understands what they tells you in school, and you can learn right off to do things in a factory.' 'They ain't always pickin' on you because you don't know things in a factory.' 'You can't never do t'ings right in school.' 'The boss he never hits yer, er slaps yer face, er pulls yer ears,

er make yer stay in at recess.' 'It's so hard to learn.' 'I don't like to learn.' 'I couldn't learn.' 'The children don't holler at ye and call ye a Christ-killer in a factory.' 'They don't call ye a Dago.' 'They're good to you at home when you earn money.' 'Youse can eat sittin' down, when youse work.' 'You can go to the nickel show.' 'You don't have to work so hard at night when you get home.' 'Yer folks don't hit ye so much.' 'You can buy shoes for the baby.' 'You can give your mother yer pay envelope.' 'What ye learn in school ain't no good. Ye git paid just as much in the factory if ye never was there. Our boss he never went to school.' 'That boy can't speak English, and he gets six dollars. I only get four dollars, and I've been through the sixth grade.' 'When my brother is fourteen, I'm going to get him a job here. Then, my mother says, we'll take the baby out of the 'Sylum for the Half Orphans.' 'School ain't no good. When you works a whole month at school, the teacher she gives you a card to take home, that says how you ain't any good. And yer folks hollers on yer an' hits yer.' 'Oncet I worked in a night school in the Settlement;

an' in the day school too. Gee, I humped myself. I got three cards with "excellent" on 'em. An' they never did me no good. My mother she kept 'em in the Bible, an' they never did her no good, neither. They ain't like a pay envelope.' 'School ain't no good. The Holy Father he can send ye to hell, and the boss he can take away yer job er raise yer pay. The teacher she can't do nothing.'

"To paste thousands of labels, strip mounds of tobacco, make quantities of buttonholes, requires no education that a school gives.

"A boy or a girl who at the price of much sacrifice has passed the eighth grade, gets the same wages as a child who signs his name with a cross. And to these children, and to their parents, the object of education is to help you earn money.

"A report card makes no change in the family fortunes or in the child's environment. Two plus two may be four; but the baby has no milk, the child has no shoes and the house is cold, even when he has figured and read and written for a month. But two hands of tobacco stripped is four cents, and four times

ten equals forty; and when you bring home a pay envelope with $2.40 in it at the end of the week, not only your immediate environment, but also that of the mother and father and the other children is immediately affected. No wonder that to exchange a pay envelope for a school report card seems a poor bargain to the child that works."

In a basement of the stockyards Miss Todd found a little boy under fourteen, whose father was ill of inflammatory rheumatism: she hailed the boy and told him he must quit work and go back to school. The child crawled behind a pile of boards and began to weep bitterly. Miss Todd began to question him:

"Don't you like to go to school?"

"No: I want my job," he answered, and wept afresh.

"What is it you like about your job?"

"The boss don't never hit me."

"Did they hit you at school?"

"Yes: they hits ye if ye don't learn, and they hits ye if ye whisper, and they hits ye if ye have string in yer pocket, and they hits ye if yer seat squeaks, and they hits ye if ye scrape yer feet, and they hits ye if

ye don't stand up in time, and they hits ye if yer late, and they hits ye if ye fergit the page."

Again Miss Todd found, one hot August afternoon, an obscure low attic reeking with the fumes of burning turpentine and superheated by burning gas and a big cement furnace going at full blast. A group of fourteen little girls between fourteen and fifteen years old, sitting close to the furnace, were engaged in the very necessary occupation of putting the last coat of lacquer upon a cheap variety of men's canes. Think of the grotesqueness of it—young girls were here steaming on a summer day, decorating flimsy canes, to be used by men for what? In defending themselves from assaults of mad dogs, or from infuriated assassins? No, indeed: merely to twiddle in their foolish hands. Let Miss Todd finish the story of the attic:

"'How can you stand it here, children?' I asked, wiping the dirt and perspiration from my face. 'It's so hot. Don't your heads ache?' They stared at me shyly and did not answer. 'Why don't you little girls go to school?'

"'School!' cried one who had given her name as Tillie Isakowsky, aged fourteen years and three months, shaking her head until her red bows trembled. 'School is de fiercest t'ing youse kin come up against. Factories ain't no cinch, but schools is worst.'

"'Yees, ma'am—yees, ma'am,' reiterated Bessie Oxenhelder, who was prodding me softly with her varnish-brush, in an agony of fear lest, even at my age, I might be decoyed into some school. 'Yees, ma'am. Hear to me. Me, I works two, three, four, nine mont's for de Washin'ton schools. I will not to mind my baby, I will not to scrub my floor, I will not to wash de dish. I will to learn. My teacher she hollers on me that my hair it shall be wash, that my ear it shall be wash, that my under skin under my clo's, it shall be wash; and I hollers on my mudder. I slap my baby that she spit on my book. I kick my brudders in my bed, that they shall to lay still in the night, for I will to sleep to learn. My fader he gets a mad by dat Washin'ton school, and take his pay envelope and go to de saloon. For why? For that I must to have a geog-roffee; my teacher she hollers on me for those

geogroffee, and I hollers on my mudder. I say I will kill myself in the lake if I become not a geogroffee book. My mudder she take the money off the pay envelope of de pants of my fader. He say, "You want I shall work on my empty belly," he say, "that youse kids shall loaf in a seat an' feed der head?" He break de dish, he hit my mudder, he go to the saloon. And what do I gets for all my works by dat Washin'ton man what bosses dose schools? Youse knows!' Her eyes blazed. 'I gets a bad name, dat I eats up de crackers of the lunch of de kindergarten children. It's a lie. My mudder she buy me the work certificate off my cousin, who's sixteen and don't need it no more. I take dat certificate, I get me a job. I go no more to dose Washing'ton schools.'" *

How these little stories, hot from the heart of indignant childhood, show the school fails to respond to the needs of the working child. I do not blame the teachers, overcrowded and overdriven. But I blame the system that makes the school a machine, that chills the spontaneity of the child, and

* See *McClure's Magazine* for April, 1913.

fails to train him in the arts and industries, making him ready for the working hive of the world.

The average boy, especially, *hates* school. There is absolutely nothing in it that attracts him, nothing that interests him. Nor even when children are forced into the school will they stay there a minute longer than they can help. The following figures should serve as mental dynamite for those who do not believe in disturbing the "established order":

SCHOOL	NUMBER OF STUDENTS
Grade schools, public	16,069,305
Grade schools, private	1,304,547
High schools, public	771,687
High schools, private	190,099
Universities and colleges	149,700
Technological schools	33,700
Professional schools	63,256
	18,582,294

Education *stops* in the grade schools like an ox that has been felled. Scarcely 5 per cent. of the total number of students enter the high school, one-eighteenth of one per cent. attend schools of technology and only four-fifths of one per cent. go to college.

Even these startling figures are not completely revelational; for half the children do not *finish* the graded school course, but quit as soon as the law permits.

Quick and drastic action must be taken. The whole educational system has got to be ripped up and thrown out on the lawn for the sunlight to play upon for a while. All that is merely academic, cheaply pedantic and " parroty " must be discarded. Moving pictures, the Montessori method, the group method that does away with the old stupidity of treating a room of 50 pupils as an indivisible unit, can be brought into play.

Attention must also be given to the teachers. These foster-parents of the republic—this class in charge of our children during the most important period of life—receive less pay than bricklayers. This must be remedied so that they may cease worrying about how to make both ends meet, and also have opportunity for the activities that will keep them in touch with the world of things instead of penning them up in hall bedrooms.

The high school particularly needs a thorough overhauling. The foremost educators have long been admitting quietly that

reform is imperative. As it stands today, we are wasting money on them; for the average high school devotes more attention to preparing *three* pupils for college than it does in fitting *ninety-seven* pupils for life.

In this work of reconstruction, care must be taken to bridge the chasm that now yawns between the school and the occupations. It is not enough that the curriculum itself shall be related to reality; but, in addition, the pupil must be given vocational guidance. How is it to be done?

Of a certainty, night schools will not do. After a day of toil in the mill, in the store or on the street, the child is not in any shape to fill its sleepy head with knowledge. At best the night school for children under 16 has been a stupidity, at worst a cruelty.

Study of the European systems gives us a choice between two methods or, what is better, a combination of both—*industrial training* and the *continuation school.* Germany has done the most along these lines, and there are also experiments of our own that may be referred to.

The continuation school is just what its name implies, a means of enabling the young

worker to carry on his studies and vocational instruction *after* he leaves the school. Most German cities compel apprentices between the ages of 14 and 18 to attend the continuation schools eight hours a week, forty weeks a year. Munich has 8,000 of this kind of pupils, and seven-eighths of them attend classes in which members belong to the same trade. In all there are 13 special schools and 39 different trade groups. The instruction centres about the vocation, of course, but emphasis is also placed on general education, morals, good citizenship and physical instruction. Employers give this time out of the working day, and compulsory instruction is *not* permitted after 7 o'clock P. M. or on Sundays. The Germans, please notice, appreciate the value of *play*.

In England Mrs. Sidney Webb has been leading a movement requiring that English boys and girls after leaving school, shall be carried on the rolls until their nineteenth year, the employers allotting time out of the regular working week during which educational opportunities can be utilized.

Cincinnati has come close to the idea by virtue of a private agreement between the

manufacturers and the Board of Education. The city provided the necessary equipment and proper teachers for a school of industrial education, and the manufacturers promised to furnish the pupils from their shops. The attendance averages about 200 a week, and the boys come in groups of twenty and remain four hours, the employers making no deduction in wages.

The other way—straight out-and-out industrial training schools—is a delicate proposition and must be approached with care. The Illinois plan, by which it was proposed to establish vocational schools *separate* from the public schools is as vicious a proposition as can be imagined.

The whole point of the reform is to make workers *think,* and thinkers *work.* This scheme of keeping the industrial school and the public school apart is not only a waste of money and a duplication of effort, but it defeats the very ends desired. The result would be trained workers without education on the one hand, and educated children without industrial training on the other.

Wherever this evil plan shows its head it should be killed. Vocational guidance and

industrial training must not be divorced from general education; but the two must be merged in order that the virilities of the one may be tempered by the culture of the other.

And let not the "country school" be forgotten. Here, as much as anywhere else, there is a great work to be done in the interests of the child labor problem. The God-forsaken, windswept, box-car type of rural school, in which a small per cent. of the littler children huddle during the winter months, must be burned to the ground, and a finer building raised from the ashes. The South is doing some splendid things by a system of consolidation that makes the township or county the educational unit rather than the district. Larger schools, longer terms and a better curriculum have resulted in almost every case.

Still more must be done. Here, as in the city, a vocational emphasis must be given with agriculture as principal subject. Scientific farming that will return good wages must be taught along with things that will make country life more wholesome, colorful and interesting. To this end, the agricultural colleges and normal schools must commence

to specialize on country school teaching as a distinct profession.

The suggestion has been made that the rapid growth of the interurban trolley system makes it perfectly practicable for " hand and mind " experts to go from one village to another just as in cities they go from one school to another. The factory is becoming more and more a small town proposition; and since the factory draws the immigrants, it is much the case that the village school problem is also the immigration problem.

There is an even more wonderful opportunity for purposeful young men and women in this field than in any foreign mission adventure. Think of Lawrence or some of the cities in the steel district where thousands of little foreigners are scared to death of the school, and grow to maturity in darkest ignoture. Think of Lawrence or some of the country in which they are voters. The school teacher, as Edward J. Ward phrases it, could become the *social engineer* of the community.

All this will need more money, of course. Where is it to come from? Why not from the national government? Surely an educated and enlightened citizenship is as much

of a protection to the republic as the army or the navy, isn't it?

As it is today, over 70 per cent. of the schools funds are derived from local taxation, about 15 per cent. from state taxation, about 4 per cent. from federal gifts, and the rest from miscellaneous sources. Many of the states have reached the end of their rope, also many of the communities. The *six million illiterates* over 10, disclosed by the 1910 census, are not with us because the localities are *stingy* but because they are *poor*. Since these six million may be as terrible an enemy as any foreign foe, is it not up to the government to protect itself against them?

It is true that the Page bill provides for the expenditure of $2,000,000 in 1913, and increasing millions each year thereafter, for the maintenance of instruction in agriculture, trades, industry and home economics in the high schools and for the support of extension divisions, training of teachers, etc., but not one single cent is appropriated for the use of the primary and grade schools where the real trouble lies.

A National Board of Education looks to be the logical solution of the problem. In

England and Wales, 52 per cent. of the money for elementary education comes from the government in the shape of parliamentary grants. Let the struggling states of this country, where illiteracy is the misfortune, not the fault, be given similar help.

One of the chief arguments against child labor reform and against compulsory education also is the cry that the wages of the children are necessary to the support of widowed mothers and baby sisters and brothers. This claim, for the most part, is buncombe. The federal government's report on child labor in the cotton textile industry proved that 67 per cent. of the little toilers had fathers at work, 6 per cent. had both fathers and mothers employed, 3 per cent. had idle fathers, 4 per cent. had disabled fathers, 6 per cent. had mothers who had been deserted, and 14 per cent. had widowed mothers. *Seventy-six per cent. buncombe.*

The fact remains, however, that 24 per cent. *were* the children of disabled fathers or widowed or deserted mothers. Quite clearly something must be done to relieve suffering if the children are to be taken out of the factory and put into the school where they

can grow into strong, intelligent citizens and trained workers.

A case in point is that of Michael Janese, a poor Italian recently caught up in Chicago's legal machinery. Janese was fined $5 and costs—*a total of* $29 for violation of the compulsory education laws. His offense consisted in that when his wife—the mother of twelve children—fell ill, she kept one of the older girls out of school two weeks to care for her and four babies under six years of age.

Inasmuch as Janese could not take care of a family of fourteen on a monthly wage of $40, and have a bank account at the same time, he could not pay the $29 fine, and was sent to the House of Correction to work it out at the rate of 50 cents a day. Friends, however, came to the rescue, and loaned him the money by general contribution.

There are a lot of things that could be said about this, particularly the damnable pettifoggeries by which it costs $24 to fine a poor devil $5—but the question is how to keep little Janeses in school and prevent suffering in the home.

The answer to this is the mothers' compen-

sation law, or pension law as it is called in some states. By this plan, the community helps the widowed or indigent mother to keep up her home and take care of her children by a certain monthly grant. In the case of the Janeses, aid would have been confined to the supplying of a nurse for the mother; but in the majority of instances, it means that the state pays the mother to make a shelter for the school-going children.

It is not only good Christianity but *good business*. By way of illustration, let us assume a typical case of a widow with six children, or a mother of six whose husband is flat on his back with lead poisoning, or from some sort of industrial accident.

In order to keep the roof over their heads, she takes a position in a laundry, going to work at 7 in the morning and returning home at 7 at night. If she is in a state without compulsory education laws, she puts the older children at work so as to add to her meagre income. If the law forbids, the school-going children carry papers after school or engage in some of the street trades.

Disaster is inevitable. Quite manifestly she is unable to give them a mother's care. Soon

the children, too tired to study by reason of their outside work, drop behind the class and become truants. Street trades, it may be mentioned, furnish 60 per cent. of the inmates to reformatories. The little girls, left unguarded in the house all day, may become the victims of depraved boys. The heavy hand of the law, either through the Humane Society, truant officers or the juvenile court, soon falls upon the home. The poor wretched mother is accused of unfitness; and the usual course is to take the children away from her and put them into institutions from which they may be adopted without the mother's knowledge or consent. This is an expensive business. The 90,000 children now immured in institutions emburden the taxpayers from fifteen to twenty millions a year.

It costs, on an average, from $10 to $15 a month to keep a child in an institution, to break up a home, to rob a mother of incentive, and to turn out citizens with the "institution stamp" on them. Six times $10 is $60, which is the amount that the community would have to pay for kidnapping the brood of the widow that we are considering. Think what she could do with that in the home!

At present, Colorado, California, Washington, Illinois, Idaho, Oregon, Utah, Ohio and Oklahoma have the mothers' pension law—seven of them equal suffrage states, it will be noted. Utah is most generous, allowing $10 a month for the oldest child under 15, and $7 a month for each additional child.

Here, then, is a clear, good way to smash that phase of child labor that has the "poor widow" in it. But—and once again we part with tradition and established theory—why not go deeper still and *keep the widow from being poor?* Each year sees an increase, rather than a decrease, in the number of wage earners killed or maimed, and the subsequent procedure is usually the same in the majority of cases. Claim agents, either by bullying or wheedling, secure settlements that are the essence of despicable robbery, preying upon ignorance, credulity or fear. The head attorney for the great Rockefeller coal corporation in Colorado, testifying before the Congressional committee appointed to investigate the strike, admitted that the 70 deaths in the Primero disaster were settled for at the rate of $1,000 a piece, even though every murdered man had an earning capacity of $1,000

a year. The Starkville horror, in which 50 heads of families were incinerated because the Rockefeller company had refused to install certain safety devices, netted the widows no larger returns.

In event that the desolated are not too ignorant or too timid to sue for proper damages, an attorney takes the case upon a contingent fee of one-third the amount that he may recover—and even if the plaintiff finally triumphs over the Fellow Servant law and the doctrine of assumed risk, there are appeals and appeals that stretch over a weary number of years.

In the meantime the widow, or the harassed wife of the disabled man, is pegging away as best she can, working herself and also as many of her brood as the law will permit. There is the mothers' compensation law, to be sure, but why should it have to be used in a case of industrial accident?

The obvious course is a Workmen's Compensation law that will pay the widow an instant and definite sum for the loss of the head of the family or for the time during which he is disabled. It is much the habit to shrink from an experiment like this on the

ground that it would be *ruinous.* Even so, could anything be more ruinous than the present scheme of lawsuits that saddles whole families about the taxpayer's neck, and fills reform schools, brothels and institutions with neglected, poverty-stricken children? Yet this popular belief is a fear rather than a fact. Edward Bunnell Phelps, an authority, has figured it out quite accurately that the actual cost loss of a Workmen's Compensation system would be about one and a half per cent. of the pay-roll of all American industries, working out a total annual cost of $34,845,835, or an average of $6.49 an employe.

It is to be assumed, of course, that every dollar of the cost will be added to the price charged the consumer, but what of it? As Mr. Phelps says, " The adoption of a liberal system of Workmen's Compensation for industrial accidents in the factories of the country, and the consequent broad distribution, and alleviation in a large degree, of the incalculable financial suffering and privation now caused by these accidents, and practically concentrated on the factory workers or their dependents, would add just about one-quarter

of one per cent. to the price paid by the community for factory products."

There is room for a great deal of argument about the kind of system to adopt—whether by insurance companies, by employers' self-insuring organizations or by the State—and rate fixing will necessitate a searching investigation of the industries. But these are details that do not alter the fundamental importance of the reform. Than this, nothing will hit more shrewdly at one of the great causes of child labor.

The Fellow Servant law—a choice legal outrage that prevents the collection of damages where the injury is the fault of another employee—and the doctrine of assumed risk, which means that when a brakeman is killed on a rotten boxcar his widow is not entitled to damages because he assumed that risk as a part of his employment—have come down to us from the English law. Many states are nullifying them—*every one should be made to do so.*

The slightest knowledge of child labor conditions makes it clear that the entrance of the child into a trade instantly lowers the wages of that trade. Down, down, down, falls the

wage scale, and so it is that more and more children of the family are forced to work in order to keep the income at a bare existence level. And the more children that work, the lower the wages fall. Thus we get the vicious circle that is much in the mouths of economists. It is at this point that we reach the necessity for a Minimum Wage law.

The Rev. John A. Ryan, more accurately than any other, puts the case of the minimum wage when he says that society should make no more ado over " placing a minimum below which no one should be permitted to work, than it should hesitate to protect a person's pocketbook against a thief, or his life or limb against an assassin. All these things, all these goods, have to do with human life and welfare. Shylock says, 'You take my life when you do take the means whereby I live.' Why should the state pass a law protecting life and limb and property and not have laws for the protection of the means of livelihood?"

Massachusetts, Minnesota, Colorado, California, Washington and Oregon have Minimum Wage Commissions. Utah has established a flat rate minimum wage for women and minors; and preliminary investigations

are being conducted by Ohio, New York, Michigan, Missouri and Indiana.

The idea is not a new one by any means. Since 1896 the Australian states have had wage boards composed of employers and employees that fix compensation; and England has a minimum wage board for "home workers" in four trades, a plan that has worked splendidly.

Neither chapter nor book would be complete without fervent reference to the work of the Children's Bureau established in 1912 to do for babies what the Bureau of Fisheries and the Department of Argiculture have been doing for trout, seeds and soils for lo, these many years.

Brilliantly headed by Miss Julia Lathrop, it is commissioned to report upon all matters pertaining to welfare of children and child life among all classes; but at the outset it is devoting entire energy to showing the imperative need of laws for the registration of all births and deaths in the United States.

It is saddening indeed to learn that 300,000 babies under one year of age die annually. Between 1900 and 1910 over 2,500,000 returned to the unknown heaven whence they

came, and the medical profession asserts that one-half of these deaths were from preventable causes.

Think of it! It is as though the city of Chicago were destroyed in ten years, with opportunity to save one-half the population did the rest of the country choose. Nothing is more exploded than that theory of the survival of the fittest. High mortality rates always mean low health rates. To stop this slaughter, with its train of sickness, ailments and weakened constitutions, the registration of births and deaths is a primary necessity.

A birth certificate, more surely than anything else, can be made to serve a child's right to an education, and to the protection of that child from labor before the legal age. There is no accurate basis for computation; but it is certain that the number of under-age children at work through the perjury of parents is enormous. When Pennsylvania, several years ago, passed a law requiring the birth certificate before working papers could be issued, over 15,000 children went back to school, at a conservative estimate.

The United States is the most backward of all the civilized countries in the matter of

birth registration, only 63 per cent. of the population living in places where the law requires registration. The Census Bureau report of 1910, while not wishing to deprive other cities of credit, could not refrain from stating that "The most utterly worthless registration of births among all the great cities of the entire civilized world may be claimed by the cities of Baltimore, Chicago and New Orleans."

The work of the citizen in this regard is, first, to command the Congressional delegation from his or her state to give the Children's Bureau all possible support. It has a wretchedly small appropriation when compared with the money spent on Texas fever, hog cholera and the boll weevil—barely $50,000—and as the work gets closer and closer to child labor, even this amount will be threatened. The second thing is for the citizens to get behind the Bureau in its fight for an effective births and deaths registration law in every city and every state.

The list of things that must be done to get at the roots of the child labor evil could be prolonged indefinitely. Popular control of the judiciary so that the people can protect

the laws they make from insolent and corrupt attack—the elevation of human rights above property rights—dynamite under our whole system of juvenile education so that it may be rescued from the backwaters and placed in the heart of the living stream—laws to take poverty out of the list of crimes—laws to protect the laborer's hire from the avarice of unscrupulous power and to safeguard his rights—inquiry into conditions so that we may be fortified with facts—all these things are only battles in a long campaign.

As has been emphasized, the Child Labor tragedy is not an *isolated* evil—a thing detached that may be dealt with separately—but is part and parcel of the whole dead weight of inequality and injustice that the world is trying so hard to lift up and cast away.

It is not enough to protect the child alone from premature employment, for there is also the child's environment to be considered with relation to its future, and as long as there is greed, rapacity and hatred in the world, this future is menaced in spite of all the laws that may be passed to guard its present. It is in thinking of this that we may

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glimpse the real cause of the Child Labor evil and all other evils—*the curse of involuntary poverty that has been brought upon us by the world's denial of the Brotherhood of Man.*

Recognition of this is the Ultimate Victory. It is also the Struggle Everlasting, yet it is without pathos, for in such a cause even the defeats are triumphs and in the battle there is always a high and solemn joy.

Yes, our final hope is in brotherhood; yet brotherhood is only a floating vapor until we find for it an economic or material basis. The State must become the organ of Fraternity. So let these lines from Edwin Markham be our last appeal:

BROTHERHOOD

The crest and crowning of all good,
Life's final star, is Brotherhood;
For it will bring again to Earth
Her long-lost Poesy and Mirth;
Will send new light on every face,
A kingly power upon the race.
And till it come, we men are slaves,
And travel downward to the dust of graves.

Come, clear the way, then, clear the way:
Blind creeds and kings have had their day,
Break the dead branches from the path;
Our hope is in the aftermath—
Our hope is in heroic men,
Star-led to build the world again.
To this event the ages ran:
Make way for Brotherhood—make way for
Man.

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